Social Anarchism and Organisation

Anarchist Federation of Rio de Janeiro

2008

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The first Congress of the FARJ was held with the principal objective of deepening our reflections on the question of organisation and formalising them into a programme. This debate has been happening within our organisation since 2003. We have produced theoretical materials, established our thinking, learned from the successes and mistakes of our political practice it was becoming increasingly necessary to further the debate and to formalise it, spreading this knowledge both internally and externally. The document "Social Anarchism and Organisation" formalises our positions after all these reflections. More than a purely theoretical document, it reflects the conclusions realised after five years of practical application of anarchism in the social struggles of our people. The document is divided into 16 parts. It has already been published in Portuguese in a book co-published between Faísca and the FARJ.

Document approved at the 1st Congress, held on 30th and 31st of August 2008

The first Congress of the Anarchist Federation of Rio de Janeiro pays tribute to its comrades:

Juan Perez Bouzas (1899-1958)

> Featured anarchist cobbler of Galician origin that, with unusual talent and determination, highlighted the necessity of the deepening of the struggle. In 2008 we remember the fiftieth anniversary of his death (05/09/1958).

Ideal Peres (1925-1995)

> That, with sensibility and ample vision of the political horizon, guaranteed the maintenance of the social axis of anarchism and the connection of generations of militants.

Plínio Augusto Coêlho (1956-)

> Tireless in giving substance to our dreams, connecting them to the long thread that binds us to those who preceded us in the quiet or turbulent act of revolution.

> *If you remained isolated, if each one of you were obliged to act on their own, you would be powerless without a doubt; but getting together and organising your forces – no matter how weak they are at first – only for joint action, guided by common ideas and attitudes, and by working together for a common goal, you will become invincible.*
>
> **Mikhail Bakunin**

Translator's Introduction

This document, first published in Portuguese under the title *Anarquismo Social e Organização* and adopted at the first Congress of the *Federação Anarquista do Rio de Janeiro* in August 2008, seeks to map out the FARJ's theoretical conception of an organised, class struggle anarchism and, "More than a purely theoretical document, [...] reflects the conclusions realised after five years of practical application of anarchism in the social struggles of our people".

In it the FARJ traces its historical and organisational roots through the militant histories of *Carioca*[1] anarchists such as Ideal Peres, who struggled to keep the flame of anarchism alight during the dark days of dictatorship, to militants such as his father, Juan Perez Bouzas, Galician immigrant anarchist who participated decisively in the Battle of Sé in 1934, "when the anarchists rejected the *Integralistas*[2] under bursts of machine gun fire".

In what is perhaps one of the most comprehensive elaborations on the Latin American concept of *especifista* anarchism now available in English, *Social Anarchism and Organisation* traces and outlines the theoretical and practical influences on the FARJ's conception of anarchist organisation and its strategy for social transformation. It advocates a conception of anarchism that divides anarchist activity into two levels of activity – the social (social or 'mass' movement) and political (specific anarchist organisation) – arguing that this *dual-organisationalist* approach to anarchist organisation is consistent with, and can by traced back to the ideas and practices of Bakunin himself in the Alliance of Socialist Democracy. The FARJ traces this common political lineage back to Bakunin through the experiences of the *Federación Anarquista Uruguaya* (FAU) and those of the 1918 *Aliança Anarquista* and 1919 *Partido Comunista* (libertarian in content); through the experience of the *Magonistas* during the Mexican Revolution and the radical phases of the *Partido Liberal Mexicano* (PLM); through the experiences of the *Federación Anarquista Iberica* (FAI) and *Friends of Durruti* group during the Spanish Revolution, and those of the authors of the *Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists* (Platform); to those of Errico Malatesta in his conception of the anarchist party.

Drawing from the experience of the loss of what it terms the "social vector of anarchism" (anarchism's social influence) at the *end of the glorious period of anarchism* , the FARJ advocates the need for a specific anarchist organisation – tightly organised, comprising highly committed militants sharing high levels of theoretical and strategic unity – that, through participating in and supporting popular movements and struggles against exploitation and domination, seeks to influence these movements with anarchist principles and in a revolutionary and libertarian direction. The final objective thereof being the recapturing of the social vector of anarchism as a necessary step towards the introduction of libertarian socialism by means of social revolution.

In seeking to increase the social influence of anarchism the FARJ reasserts the need for anarchism to come increasingly into contact with the *exploited classes* , thus identifying the class

[1] Someone who comes from Rio de Janeiro

[2] Brazilian fascist movement

struggle as the most important and fertile terrain in which to attempt to spread anarchist principles and practices. For these to take root, however, it is essential for organised anarchists to carry out permanent and consistent propaganda, organisational and educational work within the movements and organisations of the exploited class and – critically for the FARJ – to always act in a manner consistent with what it terms a "militant ethic". *Social Anarchism and Organisation* outlines the FARJ's conception of the various tasks of the specific anarchist organisation, as well as its structure, processes for attracting new members and its orientation towards social movements – all according to the logic of *concentric circles*.

In formulating strategic answers to the questions, "where are we?", "where do we want to go?" and "how do we think we can leave where we are and arrive at where we want to be?", *Social Anarchism and Organisation* articulates the FARJ's understanding of social classes under "the society of exploitation and domination" – capitalism and state – as well as its final objectives – social revolution and libertarian socialism – and how these may look. In so doing it explains the FARJ's conception of "the popular organisation" which – uniting social movements struggling for freedom and accumulating the experiences and gains made in the daily class struggle – would, rather than representing the simple sum of the forces of isolated social movements, constitute a far greater social force that, at the moment in which it becomes greater than that of the state and capital, should make a decisive break with the current system and, using violence as a necessary response to the violence of the state and capital, initiate the transition to libertarian socialism by means of social revolution. Since initial publication of this document, however, the FARJ has taken to using the term "popular power" as a substitute for "the popular organisation", and has further developed its understanding of this concept so central to *especifismo*.

In the more than three years since adoption of this document the FARJ has undergone a number of theoretical developments, such as: deepening its conception of class based on the category of "domination", while considering economic class as one kind of domination; new research and understanding of the history of Brazilian anarchism in the decades of the 1940s and 1950s; theory and method of analysis and the deepening of some topics on anarchist organisation. There have also been some practical developments, including the development of "social work" with the following movements: Grassroots Unemployed Workers Movement (MTD-Pela Base), Landless Movement (MST), Popular Councils Movement (Movimento Conselhos Populares) and participation in the creation of a "Popular Organisation" tendency. Although this document, located within a particular Latin American context, was first published and adopted over three years before this translation it remains an insightful and instructive contribution to global contemporary anarchist theory and practice; relevant to anyone committed to finding in anarchist praxis the most suitable response to the question, "how do we think we can leave where we are and arrive at where we want to be?" I hope this translation does it justice.

Jonathan Payn
Johannesburg, March 2012

The Context of the 2008 Congress and the Debate about Organisation

To theorise effectively it is essential to act.

Uruguayan Anarchist Federation (FAU)

The first Congress of the FARJ was held with the principal objective of deepening our reflections on the question of organisation and formalising them into a programme.

Since 2003 the debate around organisation has been taking place within our organisation. We had produced theoretical materials, developed our thinking, learned from the successes and mistakes of our political practice and it was becoming increasingly necessary to further the debate and to formalise it, spreading this knowledge both internally and externally.

The practical work of our two fronts – occupations and community – was absolutely central to the theoretical reflections that we made in this period. It even contributed to the creation of our third front in early 2008 – the agro-ecological front, called Anarchism and Nature.

One year ago we decided to have a debate around organisation, in necessary depth, with the aim of formalising the conclusions into a document that would be validated at the 2008 Congress. For this reason, still in 2007, we took some actions to contribute to the necessary theoretical maturity that would be essential to this path we wanted to take:

- Activation of the Political Education Secretary
- Carrying-out of Internal Education Seminars
- Development of Education Handbooks for Militants

These actions sought to give to each militant of our organisation the structure, space and necessary support so that this debate would be able to take place in the most desirable way possible. We made a great effort to read, write, debate, revisit materials already written, deepen discussions, make clarifications; in sum, to plan in the fullest we thought necessary for this debate.

However, we did not only want to provide a forum for debate. We wanted to reach more conclusive positions, or deepen the political line of the organisation. As one of the features of our organisational model is theoretical and ideological unity, we wanted to use this time for the deepening of certain theoretical and ideological questions, and ultimately arrive at concrete positions, to be defined and disseminated by the whole organisation.

In these five years we had always thought that in order to develop a political line we necessarily need to think of the mutual influence that exists between theory and practice, since we consider them inseparable. When both interact reciprocally, and in a positive way, they enhance the results of all the work of the organisation. With good theory you improve practice, with good practice

you improve theory. There is no way to conceive the anarchist organisation as with only theory and no practice, or even developing a theory and trying to completely adapt the practice to it.

From the beginning we thought it would be fundamental not to construct an organisation that, distant from struggles, writes documents and then goes into practice with the objective of adapting it to the theory. Likewise, it never appeared possible to us to conceive anarchist organisation with only practice but no theory, or even assuming as theory everything that happens in practice. We always sought a balance that, on the one hand, did not have as an objective to theorise deeply in order to begin acting and, on the other, sought to ensure that the action was in line with the theory which, in our understanding, strengthens the result of militants' efforts without unnecessary loss of energy.

In this debate, which took place in the last two years and which is formalised in this document, we desired to develop a proper theory that was not simply a repetition of other theories developed in other places and at other times. Obviously, our whole theory is imbued, from beginning to end, with other theories and of other authors that lived and acted in other contexts. It would be impossible to conceive of a consistent anarchist theory without the contribution of the classical anarchists, for example. However, we made a point of having a long reflection on these – the theories and thoughts of these authors – and whether they make sense in our context today. We seek to create proper concepts, aiming to give original character to the theory that we wanted to create, and in this endeavour we think we have been very successful as we, in our view, construct and formalise a coherent theory, articulating classical and contemporary theories, as well as our own conceptions. Nevertheless, we do not believe that this is a definitive theory. Many aspects could be improved. Lastly… the most important thing is to make it clear that we think we are taking the first steps along this path we wish to follow.

Finally, we desired to build this discussion and its formalisation in a collective manner. It is not enough for us that one or another comrade writes all the theory of the organisation and that others simply observe and follow their positions. It was because of this that we sought, throughout this period, to consider all the positions of the organisation and not just of one militant or another. This too, in our view, adds value to the text. It does not come from the head of one or other intellectual that thinks of politics detached from reality, but on the contrary is the result of five years of struggle and organisation of anarchism in permanent contact with the struggles of our time, seeking a revolutionary social transformation towards libertarian socialism. In sum, it is the result of five years of practical activity.

With the purpose of contributing one more step, of formalising theoretically that which has accumulated in our short history, we held the first Congress – which occurred in conjunction with the commemoration of five years of the FARJ – on 30 and 31 August 2008. The main reflections of which are recorded below.

Ethics, commitment, freedom!

Social Anarchism, Class Struggle and Centre-Periphery Relations

> […] because anarchism is an ideology which refuses to create new central systems with new peripheral areas.
>
> **Rudolf de Jong**

Anarchism is, for us, an ideology; this being a set of ideas, motivations, aspirations, values, a structure or system of concepts that has a direct connection with action – that which we call political practice. Ideology requires the formulation of final objectives (long term, future perspectives), the interpretation of the reality in which we live and a more or less approximate prognosis about the transformation of this reality. From this analysis ideology is not a set of abstract values and ideas, dissociated from practice with a purely reflective character, but rather a system of concepts that exist in the way in which it is conceived together with practice and returns to it. Thus, ideology requires voluntary and conscious action with the objective of imprinting the desire for social transformation on society.

We understand anarchism as an ideology that provides orientation for action to replace capitalism, the state and its institutions with libertarian socialism – a system based on self-management and federalism – without any scientific or prophetic pretensions.

Like other ideologies, anarchism has a history and specific context. It does not arise from intellectuals or thinkers detached from practice, who pursued only abstract reflection. Anarchism has a history which developed within the great class struggles of the nineteenth century, when it was theorised by Proudhon and took shape in the midst of the International Workers Association (IWA), with the work of Bakunin, Guillaume, Reclus and others who advocated revolutionary socialism in opposition to reformist, legalist or statist socialism. This tendency of the IWA was later known as "federalist" or "anti-authoritarian" and found its continuity in the militancy of Kropotkin, Malatesta and others.

Thus it was within the IWA that anarchism took shape, "in the direct struggle of the workers against capitalism, from the needs of the workers, from their aspirations to freedom and equality that lived, particularly, in the masses of workers in the most heroic times"[1]. The work of theorising anarchism was done by thinkers and workers who were directly involved in social struggles and who helped to formalise and disseminate the sentiment that was latent in what they called the "mass movement". Thus Over the years anarchism developed theoretically and practically. One the one hand it contributed in a unique way to episodes of social transformation, maintaining its ideological character such as, for example, in the Mexican Revolution, the

[1] Dielo Trouda "Plataforma organizativa por una Unión General de Anarquistas". Translation to Spanish, revised and corrected by Frank Mintz. We use quotes from this translation made directly from the Russian, as the versions available to us in Portuguese and Spanish, both translated from the French, have several differences from the Russian

Russian Revolution, the Spanish Revolution or even in Brazilian episodes, like the General Strike of 1917 and the Insurrection of 1918. On the other hand in certain contexts anarchism assumed certain characteristics that retreated from the ideological character, transforming it into an abstract concept which became merely a form of critical observation of society. Over the years this model of anarchism assumed its own identity, finding references in history and at the same time losing its character of the struggle for social transformation. This was more strikingly evident in the second half of the twentieth century. Thought of from this perspective anarchism ceases to be a tool of the exploited in their struggle for emancipation and functions as a hobby, a curiosity, a theme for intellectual debate, an academic niche, an identity, a group of friends, etc. For us, this view seriously threatens the very meaning of anarchism.

This disastrous influence on anarchism was noted and criticised by various anarchists from Malatesta, when he polemicised with the individualists that were against organisation,[2] to Luigi Fabbri, who made his critique of the bourgeois influences on anarchism already in the early twentieth century[3], up to Murray Bookchin who, in the mid-1990s, noted this phenomenon and tried to warn:

> Unless I am very wrong – and I hope to be – the social and revolutionary objectives of anarchism are suffering the attrition of reaching a point where the word anarchy becomes part of the elegant bourgeois vocabulary of the next century – disobedient, rebellious, carefree, but delightfully harmless[4].

We advocate that anarchism recaptures its original ideological character, or as we previously defined it, a "system of concepts that has a direct connection with action, [...] of political practice". Seeking to recapture this ideological character and to differentiate ourselves from other currents in the broad camp of contemporary anarchism, we advocate social anarchism and therefore corroborate the criticisms of Malatesta and Fabbri and affirm the dichotomy identified by Bookchin; that there is today a social anarchism returning to struggles with the objective of social transformation, and a lifestyle anarchism that renounces the proposal for social transformation and involvement in the social struggles of our time.

For us social anarchism is a type of anarchism that, as an ideology, seeks to be a tool of social movements and the popular organisation with the objective of overthrowing capitalism and the state and of building libertarian socialism – self-managed and federalist. To this end it promotes the organised return of anarchists to the class struggle, with the goal of recapturing what we call the social vector of anarchism. We believe that it is among the exploited classes – the main victims of capitalism – that anarchism is able to flourish. If, as Neno Vasco put it, we have to throw the seeds of anarchism on the most fertile terrain, this terrain is for us the class struggle that takes place in popular mobilisations and in social struggles. Seeking to oppose social anarchism with lifestyle anarchism, Bookchin asserted that

> social anarchism is radically at odds with an anarchism which focuses on lifestyle, the neo-situationist invocation of ecstasy and the increasingly contradictory

original. Although the title of the document here is Spanish, we are referring to the same document translated into English as "The Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists".

[2] Errico Malatesta, "Anarquismo y Anarquia". Excerpt from Pensiero and Volontà, May 16, 1925. In: Vernon Richar

[3] Luigi Fabbri, "Bourgeois Influences on Anarchism"

[4] Murray Bookchin, "Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: an unbridgeable chasm".

> sovereignty of the petty bourgeois ego. The two diverge completely in their defining principles – socialism or individualism.[5]

Commenting on the title of his book Anarquismo Social (Social Anarchism) Frank Mintz, another contemporary militant and thinker emphasised: "this title should be useless, because the two terms are implicitly linked. It is likewise misleading because it suggests that there may be a non-social anarchism, outside of struggles"[6]. In this way we understand that social anarchism is necessarily implicated in the class struggle.

Within our vision of social anarchism, as "a fundamental tool for the support of daily struggles"[7], we also need to clarify our definition of class. While considering the class struggle as central and absolutely relevant in society today we understand that the Marxists, by choosing the factory worker as the unique and historic subject of the revolution, despise all other categories of the exploited classes, while also potentially revolutionary subjects. The authoritarians' conception of the working class, which is restricted only to the category of industrial workers, does not cover the reality of the relations of domination and exploitation that have occurred throughout history and even the relationships that occur in this society. Just as it does not cover the identification of revolutionary subjects of the past and present.

Starting from the need to clarify this conception of class, we include in the camp of the exploited classes – which can and should contribute to the process of social transformation by means of class struggle – other categories that have in large part received the attention of anarchists throughout history. This definition of the conception of class does not change the class struggle as the main terrain for the action of social anarchism, but offers a different way of seeing our goal: the transformation of centre-periphery relations, or more specifically, the transformation of the relations of domination of the peripheries by the centres. Based on the classification of Rudolf de Jong[8] and on our own recent history of struggle, we conceptualise all the exploited classes starting from the centre-periphery relations. Thus, taking part in this group are:

a. Cultures and societies completely estranged and distanced from the centre; not at all "integrated", and "savage" in the eyes of the centre. For example, the Indians of the Amazon.

b. Peripheral areas related to the centre and belonging to its socio-economic and political structures that attempt, at the same time, to maintain their identities. They are dominated by the centre, threatened in their existence by the economic expansion thereof. By the standards of the centre they are "backwards" and underdeveloped. For example, the indigenous communities of Mexico and the Andean countries. Other examples in this category – perhaps we should talk of a subgroup b.1 – are small farmers, skilled workers and peasants threatened in their social and economic existence by the progress of the centre and who still struggle for their independence.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Frank Mintz, Anarquismo Social. São Paulo: Imaginário/Faísca/FARJ/CATL, 2006, p. 7.

[7] FARJ. "A Propriedade é um Roubo". In: Protesta! 4. Rio de Janeiro/São Paulo: FARJ/CATL, 2007, p. 11.

[8] As the author states, this classification is not intended to exhaust the relations and there are categories that overlap. The term "area", also according to the author, refers more to a social than a geographical concept. Rudolf de Jong. "Algumas Observações sobre a Concepção Libertária de Mudança Social". In: Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro. "O Estado Autoritário e Movimentos Populares". Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1980, pp. 305-353. The original classification is on pages 309 and 310 of the book. This text was reissued in 2008 by Faísca Publications, in co-edition with the FARJ, with

c. Economic classes or socio-economic systems that used to belong to the centre, but returned to a peripheral position after technological innovations and socio-economic developments in the centre. For example, the lumpen proletariat, precarious informal workers and the permanent army of the unemployed.

d. Social classes and groups that take part in the centre in an economic sense, but that are peripheral in a social, cultural and/ or political sense: the working classes, the proletariat in emerging industrial societies, women, blacks, homosexuals.

e. Centre-periphery relations of a political nature, whether between states or within them: colonial or imperialist relations, capital versus provincial relations etc. Such relations in the capitalist system are developed in parallel with the economic relations mentioned above – or, group e.1: neo-capitalist domination, internal colonisation and exploitation.

Accepting this classification, and being conscious of its limitations, we define the category of exploited classes as the peripheral areas that are dominated by the centre. It is important to stress that we do not consider as part of this set of exploited classes individuals who are in theory in peripheral areas, but that in practice establish relations of domination over others, thus becoming new centres. Hence the need for all the struggles of the exploited classes to have a revolutionary perspective, in order that they do not seek simply to make parts of the peripheral areas constituted into new centres.

Proceeding from this definition, there are two ways of thinking about social transformation: one, authoritarian, historically used by the heirs of Marxism (revolutionary or reformist) and another, libertarian, used by the anarchists.

Authoritarians, including some who call themselves anarchists, think of the centre as a means, and orientate their politics towards it. For them, the centre – considering this to be the state, the party, the army, the position of control – is an instrument for the emancipation of society, and "the revolution means in first place the capturing of the centre and its power structure, or the creation of a new centre"[9]. The authoritarians' very conception of class is based on the centre, when defining the industrial proletariat as a historical subject – which is described in the letter "d" in the definition cited above – and excludes and marginalises other categories of the exploited classes that are in the periphery like, for example, the peasantry.

Libertarians do not think of the centre as a means, and struggle permanently against it, building their revolutionary model and their strategy of struggle in the direction of all the peripheries – explained by the letters that go from "a" to "e" in the definition above. That is, in its activity in the class struggle anarchism considers as elements of the exploited classes traditional communities, peasants, unemployed, underemployed, homeless and other categories frequently overlooked by the authoritarians. "Thus the struggle would be taken up by someone who really [feels] the effects of the system, and therefore [needs] urgently to abolish it"[10]. Anarchists stimulate social movements in the periphery from the grassroots and seek to build a popular organisation in order to combat – in solidarity – the existing order and create a new society that would be based on equality and freedom, and in which classes would no longer make sense. In this struggle anarchists utilise the means that contain, within themselves, the germs of the future society.

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the title "A Concepção Libertária da Transformação Social Revolucionária".

[9] Ibid. p. 312

[10] FARJ. "Por um Novo Paradigma de Análise do Panorama Internacional". In: Protesta! 4!, p. 31.

> The anarchist conception of the social forces behind social change is much more general [...] than the Marxist formula. Unlike Marxism, it does not afford a specific role to the industrialised proletariat. In anarchist writings we find all kinds of workers and poor, all the oppressed, all those that somehow belong to peripheral groups or areas and are therefore potential factors in the revolutionary struggle for social change[11].

With this conception of revolutionary forces, we affirm that "everything indicates that it is in the periphery, in the 'margins', that the revolution keeps its flame alight"[12]. Therefore, our conclusion is that anarchism has to be in permanent contact with the peripheries in order to seek out its project of social transformation.

[11] Rudolf de Jong. Op. Cit. p. 324.

[12] FARJ. "Por um Novo Paradigma...". In: Protesta! 4!, p. 31.

Anarchism in Brazil: Loss and Attempted Recovery of the Social Vector

> We are combatants of a great war.
>
> All combatants mutually "understand" how to fight, assuming "commitments", without which there cannot be unity of action. Those who "understand" this with others are no longer masters of their will entirely, held by a few threads to a signed agreement.
>
> If the threads break, the agreement is broken, if "you misunderstand, desist from the common fight", you flee the struggle, you evade your comrades.
>
> **José Oiticica**

Anarchism arose in Brazil in the nineteenth century as an order-destabilising element, with some influence over the revolts of the time – as was the case with the Praieira Insurrection of 1848 – over the artistic and cultural environment as well as with the experiences of the experimental agricultural colonies at the end of the century. The Cecilia Colony (1890-1894) being the most well-known of these experiences. There are reports of strikes, workers' newspapers and the first attempts at organising centres of workers' resistance in the same century.

The emergence of what we call the "social vector of anarchism" began at the beginning of the 1890s, driven by a growth in the social insertion of anarchism in the unions, which culminated in the second decade of the twentieth century.

We call the social vector of anarchism those popular movements that have a significant anarchist influence – primarily with regard to their practical aspects – irrespective of the sectors in which they occur. These mobilisations, fruits of the class struggle, are not anarchist as they are organised around questions of specific demands. For example, in a union, the workers struggle for better salaries; in a homeless movement, they struggle for housing; in an unemployed movement, they struggle for work etc. However, they are spaces for the social insertion of anarchism that, by means of its influence, confers on the most combative and autonomous practical movements with the use of direct action and direct democracy, aiming at social transformation. The mobilisations constituted in the social vector of anarchism are made within the social movements, considered by us as preferred spaces for social work and accumulation, and not as a mass to be directed.

In Brazil, the social vector of anarchism began to develop in the late nineteenth century with the growth of the urban network and the population in the cities, and then with industrial growth which, of course, also saw the growing exploitation of workers; victims of exhausting days, unhealthy working conditions and low wages in factories that also employed child labour. With the objective of defending the working class from these conditions of practically unbearable exploitation arose several labour organisations, riots, strikes and uprisings – all of which were becoming increasingly common.

The intensification of class struggle in Brazil was occasioned by the coachmen's strike of 1900, a number of strikes in 1903 that peaked in the general strike initiated by the weavers and the uprisings that culminated in the 1904 Vacina Revolt. In 1903 the Federation of Class Associations (Federação das Associações de Classe) was founded in the state of Rio de Janeiro. It followed the revolutionary syndicalist model of the French CGT and was later transferred to the capital and named the Brazilian Regional Workers' Federation (Federação Operária Regional Brasileira - FORB) in 1906, some time after a visit by members of the Argentine Regional Workers' Federation (Federación Obrera Regional Argentina - FORA) and a solidarity campaign with Russian workers.

By 1904 we can say that anarchism was able to present itself as an ideological tool of struggle and it "was, without a doubt, revolutionary syndicalism that was responsible for the first social vector achieved by the anarchists in the large Brazilian centres"[1]. In 1905, in Sao Paulo, shoemakers, bakers, carpenters and hatters founded the Labour Federation of Sao Paulo (Federação Operária de São Paulo- FOSP) and, in 1906, came the Labour Federation of Rio de Janeiro (Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro - FORJ), which led in 1917 to the General Union of Workers (União Geral dos Trabalhadores - UGT) and brought together the "resistance unions [i.e. militant, combative]" . In 1919 the UGT became the Federation of Workers of Rio de Janeiro (Federação dos Trabalhadores do Rio de Janeiro - FTRJ) and, in 1923, the FORJ was re-founded.

In April 1906 the Brazilian Regional Labour Congress (Congresso Operário Regional Brasileiro), later known as the First Brazilian Labour Congress (Primeiro Congresso Operário Brasileiro), took place in Rio de Janeiro receiving delegates from several Brazilian states, representing diverse categories. The Congress approved its adhesion to French revolutionary syndicalism, adopting labour neutrality, federalism, decentralisation, anti-militarism, anti-nationalism, direct action and the general strike. The Second and Third Congresses took place, respectively, in 1913 and in 1920. In 1908 the Brazilian Labour Confederation (Confederação Operária Brasileira - COB) was founded.

The choice of revolutionary syndicalism occurred through the adoption of the economic camp of mobilisation and by the interesting proposal of federalism, which permitted the autonomy of the union in the federation and of this (the federation) in the confederation. Besides this, there was an international influence from the adoption of this model in other parts of the world. The means of struggle made by the mobilisation around short-term issues serves as a "revolutionary gymnastics", which prepares the proletariat for the social revolution.

> The anarchists hoped that in concrete action, in solidarity, and in the empirical observation of the contradictions between capital and labour, evidenced in conflicts, was the great lesson to be learned by the workers. That was the guarantee, they said, of the acquisition of ideological principles, not by rhetorical preaching or manuals, deprived of sensible experience, but by the practice of revolutionary and daily action by the masses.[2]

The first decade of the twentieth century counted more than one hundred strike movements, which acted, principally, in relation to the salary question. During the years of 1917 to 1920 more than two hundred demonstrations and strikes took place between Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo

[1] Alexandre Samis. "Pavilhão Negro sobre Pátria Oliva". In: *História do Movimento Operário Revolucionário*. São Paulo: Imaginário, 2004, p. 179.

[2] Ibid. p. 136.

alone. This whole conjuncture of mobilisation occurred with ample influence of the anarchists, who tried to carry out their propaganda in the unions; not circumscribing these within the anarchist ideology – the unions were for the workers and not for anarchist workers – but utilising them for the propagation of their ideas.

All this expectation placed on the social revolution, which was becoming more and more real since the mid-1910s, culminated in three relevant mobilisations. Firstly, in 1917 in that which became known as the 1917 General Strike, when workers of Sao Paulo, in a large way organised around the Proletarian Defence Committee, struggled against famine, carrying out sabotage and boycotting products from the Crespi, Matarazzo and Gamba industries. Among the victories of the strike movement are the eight hour work day and wage increases won by sectors of the movement. In 1918 the mobilisations continued and, in Rio de Janeiro, the Anarchist Insurrection took place. With strikes taking place in the carioca (Rio de Janeiro) factories and Campo de São Cristóvão occupied by the workers, the insurgents wanted the seizure of government buildings and the establishment in the city of the first soviet of Rio de Janeiro. Finally, in 1919, the Civil Construction Workers Union (União dos Operários em Construção Civil - UOCC) had the greatest gain of all, winning the eight hour work day for the whole sector. Besides this, outside of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, significant mobilisations took place in other states of Brazil: Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná, Santa Catarina, Minas Gerais, Pernambuco, Alagoas, Paraíba, Bahia, Ceará, Pará and Amazonas.

There was even a large cultural movement that worked together with the union mobilisations and was very important: rationalist schools inspired by the principles of (Francisco) Ferrer y Guardia, social centres, workers theatre and other initiatives that were fundamental in forging a class culture, an object of union in times of struggle.

There was also, at this ascendent juncture of struggle, the formation of two political and ideologically anarchist organisations which sought to work with the union movement. The first of these was the Anarchist Alliance of Rio de Janeiro (Aliança Anarquista do Rio de Janeiro), founded in 1918 by the need for an anarchist organisation for working within the unions, and which was important for the 1918 insurrection. However, with the repression that occurred the Alliance was disbanded, returning to organise in the first Communist Party, of libertarian inspiration, founded in 1919. Both the Anarchist Alliance and the Communist Party grouped together members of a sector of anarchism which is called "organisationalist" and which understood as necessary the distinction between levels of action – the political level, ideologically anarchist, and the social level, of union mobilisations. These militants understood as necessary the existence of specific anarchist organisations to act together with trade unions. It is important to emphasise that, at this time, anarchists already had a preoccupation with their specific organisation.

We can say that the social vector of anarchism was on an upward curve until the beginning of the 1920s when the crisis of anarchism, parallel to unionism itself, began to develop. Culminating in the 1930s in their demobilisation and in the loss of this social vector. For us, the loss of the social vector of anarchism is the result of two contexts of crisis: one of the situation and the other of anarchism itself.

The context of the situation was marked, firstly, by the repression both of trade unionism as well as anarchism, which can be seen in the third revision of the Adolfo Gordo law of 1921, which provided for the repression and deportation of anarchists, in addition to the deportation of militants to the penal colony of Clevelândia, located in the current state of Amapá, between 1924 and 1926. Besides this, there was also an ebb of social struggles around the world and frustration

with the result of the struggles that came after the Russian Revolution of 1917. Also significant was the end of the First World War and the recovery of European factories, which returned to export (including to Brazil), reducing the workers contingent in the cities and the growth of the Communist Party, founded in 1922, which from 1924 began to most strongly dispute the unions and ally itself with the reformists, proposing electoral participation as a form of political expression. Finally, the harnessing of the unions to the state which was legalised in 1930 and 1931 by the Vargas government, culminating in 1932 when the unions were obliged, by law, to have government approval and to follow operating rules determined by the state.

The context of anarchism was marked, primarily, by the confusion between different levels of activity. For many militants unionism, which was the social vector, the medium of action that should lead to an end – expressed by the social revolution and the constitution of libertarian socialism – ended up becoming the end itself. This phenomenon was already being noticed in anarchism and was the subject of fierce debate, already in 1907 at the Amsterdam Congress, between Malatesta and Monatte. Monatte, defender of "pure syndicalism", saw great similarity between syndicalism and anarchism and argued that "syndicalism is enough in itself"[3]. Malatesta, with a diametrically opposed position, considered syndicalism "a camp particularly favourable to the spread of revolutionary propaganda and also as a point of contact between anarchists and the masses"[4]. Thus, Malatesta argued for the need for two levels of activity: one politically anarchist, and the other social, within the union, which would be the means of insertion.

The positions of Malatesta and Monatte summarise the positions of the Brazilian anarchists. On one side, a part of the anarchists defended the need for specifically anarchist organisation, which should seek social insertion in the unions. On the other, anarchists who had understood militancy within the unions as their only task, and thus "forgot to form specific groups capable of giving support to revolutionary practice"[5].

Our position in relation to the social events of the early twentieth century is aligned with that of Malatesta, which was taken up in Brazil by José Oiticica who, at the time, regarded the lack of specific anarchist organisations as the problem. In 1923 he already warned of the fact that the anarchists had been dedicating themselves completely to the activities of the unions and renouncing ideological activities, confusing unionism, which was the means of insertion, with the end they wished to achieve. For him it was essential to create "anarchist federations outside of the unions"[6], such as the Alliance of 1918 and the Party of 1919 which, despite being groups or federations of this type were, unfortunately, insufficient for the task it was necessary to realise.

> For Oiticica, as we have already partially referred to, it was important at that time to direct forces towards the formation of "closed" groups, with a definite programme of action and commitment tacitly assumed by the militants[7]. The "centralisation" of the anarchist forces in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, he continued, should not be confused with the "decentralisation" typical of libertarian organisations. He then claimed two urgent steps for the efficiency of anarchist action: "selection of

[3] Pierre Monate. "Em Defesa do Sindicalismo". In: George Woodcock. *Grandes Escritos Anarquistas*. Porto Alegre: LP&M, 1998, p. 206.

[4] Errico Malatesta. "Sindicalismo: a Crítica de um Anarquista". In: George Woodcock. Op. Cit. p. 207.

[5] Alexandre Samis. "Anarquismo, 'bolchevismo' e a crise do sindicalismo revolucionário". (Still unpublished).

[6] José Oiticica in *A Pátria*, 22 of June 1923.

[7] José Oiticica, Fabio Luz and other anarchists radicalised in Rio de Janeiro took part in a specific group of

> militants and concentration of forces". And he concluded: "Only this will give us unity of action".[8]

We believe that the lack of anarchist organisations that could lend support to the class struggle, expressed most notably at that time by the unions, was also largely responsible for the loss of the social vector of anarchism. As the ideological organisations were not sedimented, the context of the crisis of unionism eventually extended to anarchism itself. Thus, a crisis at the social level also condemned the political level, since there was no real difference between the two at the time.

For us it is normal that the social level, represented at that time by unionism, has ebbs and flows, moments of ascent and descent; and the specific anarchist organisation serves precisely to accumulate the results of struggles and, sometimes, to seek out other spaces for work, other spaces for insertion. The problem is that, without anarchist organisations, when the social level – or a sector of it – enters into crisis, the anarchists are not able to find another space for social insertion.

> Once the social vector was lost, and without specific organisations capable of sustaining an ideological struggle of longer duration, it was not possible for the anarchists to immediately find another space for insertion. […] The prestige achieved through the entrance into trade unions very probably led them to believe that the potential of the class associations was inexhaustible, even superior to the changing circumstances.[9]

Thus, the crisis in revolutionary syndicalism also took the social vector of the anarchists, who then started to "organise themselves into cultural groups and for the preservation of memory"[10].

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The FARJ claims to continue the militancy of Ideal Peres and the work that originated from his history of struggle. Ideal Peres was the son of Juan Perez Bouzas (or João Peres), a Galician immigrant, anarchist and shoemaker who played an important role in Brazilian anarchism from the end of the 1910s. He was an active militant of the Alliance of Craftsmen in Footwear (Aliança dos Artífices em Calçados) and of the Workers' Federation of Sao Paulo (Federação Operária de São Paulo - FOSP), having been active in numerous strikes, pickets and demonstrations. In the 1930s he was active in the Anticlerical League (Liga Anticlerical) and, in 1934, participated decisively in the Battle of Sé – when the anarchists rejected the *Integralistas* (fascists) under bursts of machine gun fire. The following year anarchists also participated in the formation of the National Liberator Alliance (Aliança Nacional Libertadora - ANL), a co-ordination that supported the anti-fascist struggle, combating imperialism and landlordism.

Ideal Peres was born in 1925 and began his militancy in that context of crisis, when the social vector of anarchism had already been lost. This happened in 1946 when he participated in the Libertarian Youth of Rio de Janeiro (Juventude Libertária do Rio de Janeiro); in the periodicals Ação Direta (Direct Action) and Archote (Torch); in the Anarchist Union of Rio de Janeiro (União dos Anarquistas do Rio de Janeiro); in the Anarchist Congress (Congresso Anarquistas) that took

anarchists called *Os Emancipados*.

[8] Alexandre Samis. "Anarquismo, 'bolchevismo' e a crise do sindicalismo revolucionário".

[9] Ibid.

[10] Idem. "Pavilhão Negro sobre Pátria Oliva". In: *História do Movimento Operário Revolucionário*, p. 181.

place in Brazil; and in the Union of Brazilian Libertarian Youth (União da Juventude Libertária Brasileira). Ideal Peres had relevant participation in the Professor José Oiticica Study Centre (Centro de Estudos Professor José Oiticica - CEPJO), site of a series of courses and lectures that used anarchism as a "background" and which was closed down by the dictator in 1969, when Ideal was imprisoned for a month in the former Department of Social and Political Order (Departamento de Ordem Política e Social - DOPS), first in the Galeao Air Base and then in the barracks of the Military Police on Barao de Mesquita road, torture centre of the military dictatorship.

In the 1970s, after prison, Ideal organised in his house a study group that had as its goal to bring in youth interested in anarchism and, amongst other things, to put them in touch with former militants and establish links with other anarchists in Brazil. This study group would constitute the nucleus of the Libertarian Study Circle (Círculo de Estudos Libertários - CEL), conceived by Ideal and his partner Esther Redes. The CEL functioned in Rio de Janeiro from 1985 to 1995, having close to (or even inside) it the formation of other groups like the José Oiticica Anarchist Group (Grupo Anarquista José Oiticica - GAJO), the Direct Action Anarchist Group (Grupo Anarquista Ação Direta - GAAD), the 9th of July Anarchist Student Collective (Coletivo Anarquista Estudantil 9 de Julho - CAE-9), the Mutirão group; in addition to publications such as Libera…Amore Mio (founded in 1991 and which still exists today), the magazine Utopia (1988-1992) and the journal Mutirão (1991). Besides this, the CEL promoted events, campaigns and dozens (if not hundreds) of lectures and debates.

With the death of Ideal Peres in August 1995 the CEL decided to honour him by modifying its name to the Ideal Peres Libertarian Study Circle (Círculo de Estudos Libertários Ideal Peres - CELIP). CELIP gave continuity to the work of the CEL, being responsible for aggregating militancy in Rio de Janeiro and continuing the theoretical improvement thereof. Additionally, CELIP emerged with the publication of Libera, through which it developed relationships with groups across the country and abroad. It brought forward important libertarian reflections on issues that were on the agenda in Brazil and the world at the time, and served for the spread of texts and news of various groups in the country. The lectures and debates continued attracting new militants, and the relations that some militants had with the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation (Federación Anarquista Uruguaya - FAU) ended up significantly influencing the model of anarchism that was being developed within CELIP. It was co-organiser of the State Encounter of Libertarian Students of Rio de Janeiro (ENELIB) in 1999; participated in the International Meeting of Libertarian Culture in Florianopolis in 2000; and contributed to the activities of the Institute of Libertarian Culture and Action in Sao Paulo (ICAL). It also took up the struggle of the oil industry workers, re-establishing ties between anarchists and unionists in the oil industry – ties that date back to 1992/1993, when they occupied the head-quarter buildings of Petrobras (Edifício Sede da Petrobrás - EDISE) together in the first occupation of a "public" building after the military dictatorship. In 2001 this struggle of the anarchists and oil industry workers was resumed, culminating, in 2003, in the more than 10 day encampment by anarchists and oil industry workers fighting for amnesty for comrades politically dismissed. Besides this, CELIP did a range of other activities.

In 2002 we initiated a study group in order to verify the possibility for the construction of an anarchist organisation in Rio de Janeiro, the result of which was the foundation of the FARJ on 30th of August 2003. For us, there is a direct link between the militancy of Ideal Peres, the construction of the CEL, its functioning, the change of name to CELIP and the subsequent foundation of the FARJ.

When we speak of seeking the "social vector of anarchism", we necessarily make reference to the work initiated by Ideal Peres who, even in the 1980s, started working with social movements with a view to withdrawing anarchism from the strictly cultural realm to which it had been constrained since the crisis of the 1930s.

> In the first half of the 1980s, Ideal and Esther [Redes] entered a social movement, as founders and members of the Leme Friends and Residents Association (Associação dos Moradores e Amigos do Leme - AMALEME). In the 1980s a number of federations of neighbourhood, favela (township/slum) and community associations appeared in Rio de Janeiro, and Ideal participated in AMALEME, trying to influence it to use self-management practices and to demonstrate solidarity with the poor community of Morro do Chapéu Mangueira. In 1984 Ideal is elected vice president of the association and in 1985 president. His attention to neighbourhood associations having been born in another association, ALMA (Residents Association of Lauro Muller and Surroundings), perhaps the first association to demonstrate combative and self-management impetus, which ended up influencing other associations[11].

The stimulation of Ideal Peres and the very development of militancy in Rio de Janeiro showed a practical need for social work and insertion of the anarchists, which had deepened after the contacts we had with the FAU in the mid-1990s. Through Libera and contact with other groups in Brazil we assisted the initiative of the Brazilian Anarchist Construction (CAB) in 1996, disseminating a document entitled "Struggle and Organisation," which sought to give support to the creation of organisational groups that would defend the idea of "especifista" anarchism. We can say that all especifista anarchism in Brazil has been influenced by the CAB and FAU itself, and this is no different with us.

Since then the idea of social insertion and recovery of the vector was becoming larger all the time. The history of Brazil and a more strategic observation about anarchism's own reason for being were leaving us increasingly convinced that especifismo was the form of anarchist organisation most suitable to our purposes. For us, the path to the recovery of the social vector passes, necessarily, through a specifically organised anarchism that differentiates the levels of activity and is present in the class struggle. However, unlike the early twentieth century, when the preferred terrain of class struggle was the unions, we now consider that unionism can be a means of insertion, but that there are others far more important. As previously defined there is today a very broad exploited class which permits the social work and insertion of anarchists: the unemployed, peasants, landless, homeless etc. For us, to be well-organised at the political (ideological) level will allow us to find the best path to bring back this social vector of anarchism, be it where it may.

All of our actual reflection aims to think of a strategic model of organisation that enables a recovery of the social vector, in that this points to our objective of overcoming capitalism, the state and for the establishment of libertarian socialism. What we seek, in this context, is only a station in the struggle: as we emphasised at our foundation: "Here we present the FARJ, without

[11] Felipe Corrêa. *Anarquismo Social no Rio de Janeiro: breve história da FARJ e de suas origens.* Lisboa: CEL/Cadernos d'A Batalha, 2008, p. 25.

asking for anything other than a fighting station, lest righteous and profoundly beautiful dreams die."[12]

[12] FARJ. "Manifesto de Fundação".

Society of Domination and Exploitation: Capitalism and State

> The wealth of some is made with the misery of others.
>
> **Piotr Kropotkin**

> For those who are in power, the enemy is the people.
>
> **Pierre-Joseph Proudhon**

Capitalism as a system has developed since the late Middle Ages and was established in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Western Europe. It constituted itself as an economic, political and social system, basing itself on the relations between two antagonistic classes. On one hand, that which is called the "bourgeoisie" and which we will treat in this text as "capitalists", holders of private ownership of the means of production,[1] who contract workers by means of wage-labour. On the other, that which is called the "proletariat",[2] and which we will treat in this text as "workers" who, possessing nothing more than their labour power, have to sell it in exchange for a wage. As we emphasised earlier, the wage-labourer – classic object of analysis in the socialist theses of the nineteenth century – for us, constitutes today only one of the categories of the exploited classes.

The aim of the capitalists is the production of goods in order to obtain profits. "The [capitalist] enterprise is not concerned with the needs of society; its sole purpose is to increase the profits of the business-owner."[3] By means of wage labour, the capitalists pay workers as little as possible and usurp from them all the surplus of their labour, which is called surplus value. This happens because, in order to increase their profits, the capitalists must have the lowest costs, or spend as little as possible. Selling their goods at the highest prices the market can pay, they remain with the difference between what they spend and what they earn – the profit. To contain costs, and thus increase profits, the capitalists have various recourses; among them to increase productivity and decrease the costs of production. There are several ways for this to be done, such as to impose a higher work rate on workers and reduce the wages paid to them.

This relationship between capitalists and workers generates social inequality, one of the great evils of the society in which we live. This has already been established by Proudhon, when he investigated the subject in the nineteenth century:

[1] The means of production constitute the means of work and of the objects of labour. The means of labour are the instruments of production, such as machinery, equipment, tools, technology; facilities, such as buildings, warehouses, offices; the sources of energy used in production, which may be electric, hydraulic, nuclear, wind; and the means of transport. The objects of labour are the elements upon which human labour occurs, such as raw materials, vegetables and animals, the land, among others.

[2] Proletariat: those who have nothing except their offspring, or, their children.

[3] Piotr Kropotkin. "As Nossas Riquezas". In: A Conquista do Pão. Lisboa: Guimarães, 1975, p. 28.

> I affirmed then that all the causes of social inequality can be reduced to three: 1) the free appropriation of collective force, 2) inequality in trade; 3) the right to profit or fortune. And, as this triple way of usurping the goods of others is, essentially, the dominion of property, I denied the legitimacy of property and proclaimed its identity as theft[4].

For us private property, as Proudhon noted, is theft since, from wage-labour it gives to the capitalist the surplus of the workers' labour. This property, "after stripping the worker by usury, kills them slowly by exhaustion"[5].

Besides being a system that creates and maintains social inequality, capitalism is based on domination and consequent exploitation. Domination exists when a person or a group of people use "the social force of others (the dominated), and consequently their time, in order to accomplish their objectives (of the dominator) – which are not the objectives of the subjugated agent"[6]. The capitalist system is characterised by the utilisation of the labour power of the worker for the enrichment of the capitalists, and is therefore a dominative and exploitative system since it "signifies the ability and right to live off the exploitation of alien labour, the right to exploit the labour of those who do not have property or capital and are therefore forced to sell their productive power to the lucky owners of both"[7].

This relationship between capital and labour playing out on the market is not the same for both sides since the capitalists go to the market in order to obtain profit, while the workers are made to do so out of a need to work, without which they run the risk of experiencing want and not having the minimum living conditions. It is an "encounter between an initiative for profit and the other from hunger, between the master and the slave"[8].

Besides this, unemployment causes that when the capitalists go to the market they encounter workers in abundance, as there is a greater supply of workers than their is a demand:

> [...] the poor neighbourhoods of the city and the villages are full of wretches, whose children cry in front of empty plates. Thus, the factory is not even finished yet and the workers are already coming to ask for work. One hundred are required and a thousand present themselves[9].

Thus, to the capitalists it fits to impose working conditions. To the workers it fits to accept them, since "they are taken for fear of finding themselves replaced by others, to sell themselves at the lowest price. [...] Once they have found themselves in a state of poverty, the worker is forced to sell their labour for almost nothing, and by selling this product for almost nothing, sinks into an ever greater misery."[10]

Being a complex system, capitalism combines several forms of production and social classes. Peasants, despite being part of a productive process that is pre-capitalist, are still subject to the competitive requirements of the capitalist market, which means the need for fundamental ele-

[4] Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. "2eme. Memoire sur la Proprieté". In: A Nova Sociedade. Porto: Rés Editorial, s/d, p. 35.
[5] Idem. O que é a Propriedade? São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 1988, p. 159.
[6] Fabio López López. Poder e Domínio: uma visão anarquista. Rio de Janeiro: Achiamé, 2001, p. 83.
[7] Mikhail Bakunin. O Sistema Capitalista. São Paulo: Faísca, 2007, p. 4.
[8] Ibid. p. 14.
[9] Piotr Kropotkin. "A Expropriação". In: A Conquista do Pão, p. 62.
[10] Mikhail Bakunin. O Sistema Capitalista, pp. 6-7.

ments for production that are sold on the capitalist market. In competition, due to productive and technological difficulties, they are at a disadvantage in relation to the big agribusiness companies. There are also those peasants who sell their labour power, who we can consider rural workers of a traditional capitalist system. Peasants, as we have already seen, are also part of the group of exploited classes.

It is even said that capitalism should not be divided into two large classes – that of the capitalists and that of the workers – but, indeed, three; there being a third class, called the "managerial class", responsible for the control of decisive aspects of capitalism and personalising another important aspect of capitalism, which is that of the hierarchical division of labour. Throughout the history of capitalism this class has been becoming increasingly part of the capitalist class, especially by the interests defended in the process of class struggle. Today, the figure of the traditional bourgeois, the proprietor, is becoming increasingly less common; the control of companies being performed by the managers and the owners increasingly being multinational groups or even shareholders that no one knows. Actually, in the large majority, the class of managers is part of the capitalist group, or what we might call the ruling class.

There are also other actors in the capitalist market, such as workers in the trade and service sectors, who distribute goods from the capitalist enterprises or perform work for them. Both sectors follow the logic of capitalism, to a greater or lesser extent, and also act within the competition of the market; very often using wage labour, sustaining the proprietors who enjoy the fruits of this unjust relationship between capital and labour and who have the intention of generating profit.

As a system that reproduces injustice capitalism separates manual and intellectual labour. This separation is the result of inheritance and also of education, since there is different education for the rich and the poor. Thus,

> [...] as long as you have two or more levels of instruction for the different layers of society, you will necessarily have classes, meaning to say, political and economic privileges for a small number of fortunates, and slavery and misery for the majority[11].

Throughout its history capitalism has evolved, becoming involved in the political structures of European countries in the late nineteenth century, leading to imperialism and reaching its current phase of expansion, which can be called economic globalisation. According to the analysis of Subcomandante Marcos, of the Zapatista Army: "It is already not an imperialist power in the classic sense of the term, one that dominates the rest of the world, but a new extra-national power."[12] In general terms, economic globalisation is characterised by an integration, on a global scale, of the processes of production, distribution and exchange. Production is carried out in several countries, goods are imported and exported in enormous quantities and over long distances.

Stimulated since the 1970s and 1980s, "globalisation" became widespread around the world, "basing itself, from the ideological, philosophical and theoretical point of view on the doctrine of neoliberalism"[13], which advocates the free market and minimal state. The basic idea is that capital procures locations with the best conditions for its reproduction. As production necessarily requires the labour power of the workers, there is a migration of the productive spheres

[11] Idem. A Instrução Integral. São Paulo: Imaginário, 2003, p. 69.

[12] Subcomandante Marcos. "Entrevista a Ignácio Ramonet". In: Marcos: la dignidad rebelde. Chile: Aún Creemos en los Sueños SA, 2001, p. 26.

[13] Ibid. p. 27.

of capitalist enterprises to countries whose "production cost" is lower, i.e. countries with weak labour/ environmental legislation, weak trade union organisation, high levels of unemployment etc. In sum, companies seek countries/ regions where exploitation can take place without state intervention, allowing them to pay what they want, such that they are not obliged to provide benefits to workers, that they (workers) can be dismissed whenever they (capitalists) wish and that there are always many more workers wanting to fill the vacancies, allowing for production costs to become increasingly less; precarious work is sought and encouraged. This system, if it on the one hand leaves unemployed in areas with optimal conditions, on the other allows for the blackmail that causes precarity to be accepted and threatens the organisation of workers who are increasingly more controlled and pushed to the periphery, as described by Chomsky:

> The concepts of "efficiency" and "healthy economy", favourites of the rich and privileged, have nothing to offer the growing sectors of the population that are not profitable and that are pushed into poverty and despair. If they cannot be confined to the slums, they will have to be controlled in any other way[14].

Neoliberalism – which stimulates the free flow of capital, but not the free movement of people nor the comparison of working conditions – calls into question the whole condition of "welfare" which was imposed on states during large mobilisations that marked the world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Capitalism has been seeking new spaces, expanding itself both internally as well as externally, creating new capitalist enterprises through privatisation and fostering false needs by means such as advertising, which do not correspond to the real demands of society. "Neoliberal doctrines, independent of what you think of them, debilitate education and health, increase social inequality and reduce labour's share in the distribution of income."[15]

Contemporary capitalism is also responsible for the major ecological crisis devastating the world today. Motivated by the logic of profit, private enterprises are responsible for transferring the entire hierarchy of classes to the relationship between people and the environment. Pollution, deforestation, global warming, destruction of rare species and imbalances in the food chains are just some of the consequences of this relationship.

> The hierarchies, classes, property systems and political institutions that emerged with social domination were transferred, conceptually, to the relationship between humanity and nature. This was also increasingly seen as a mere resource, an object, a raw material to be exploited as ruthlessly as slaves on a plantation[16].

Brazil, being well integrated into this globalised logic for reason of policies adopted by its past governments, shares the global consequences of this new phase of capitalism.

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[14] Noam Chomsky. O Lucro ou as Pessoas. Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 2002, p. 136.

[15] Ibid. p. 36.

[16] Murray Bookchin. "Um Manifesto Ecológico: o poder de destruir, o poder de criar". In: Letra Livre 31. Rio de Janeiro: Achiamé, 2001, p. 8.

We consider the state the set of political powers of a nation, that takes shape by means of "political, legislative, judicial, military and financial institutions etc."[17]; and, in this way, the state is broader than the government. The state, since its inception in antiquity, passing through the Egypt of the pharaohs and the military-slave state of Rome, has always been an instrument for perpetuating inequality and a liberty-exterminating element, whatever the existing mode of production. This dominating institution has, in the course of history, know periods of greater or lesser strength, requiring attention to specific time and place. The state as we observe it today (the modern state) has its origins in the sixteenth century.

In the Middle Ages, with the aim of destroying the civilisation of the cities, the modern barbarians ended up making into slaves all those who once organised themselves based on free initiative and free understanding. The whole of society was levelled based on submission to the landlord, declaring that the church and state were to be the only links between individuals, that only these institutions would have the right to defend commercial, industrial and artistic interests etc. The state was constituted by means of domination, to speak on behalf of society, since it was judged to be society itself.

The state has been characterised by a "double game" of promising the rich to protect them from the poor, and promising the poor to protect them from the rich. Gradually the towns, victims of authority that were dying bit-by-bit were given to the state, which also developed its role as conqueror, moving on to wage wars against other states, seeking to expand itself and conquer new territories. The effect of the state over the cities and urban regions was disastrous. The state's role in the urban areas in the period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was;

> to annihilate the independence of the cities, to rob the rich guilds[18] of the merchants and artists, to centralise external trade in their hands and ruin it, to seize the entire internal administration of the guilds and submit interior trade, as well as the manufacturing of all things, even in their most minute detail, to a cloud of functionaries, killing, in this way, industry and the arts; taking possession of the local militias and of the entire municipal administration; crushing, through taxes, the weak to the benefit of the rich, and ruining the countries with wars.[19]

After the Industrial Revolution arose the so-called "social question", which obliged states to develop assistance plans in order to minimise the impacts of capital on labour. In the late nineteenth century arose, as an alternative to liberalism, a more interventionist conception of the state which, if on the one hand sought to create policies of "social welfare", on the other implemented methods to contain the advancement of socialist initiatives, already quite strong at the time.

Today the state has two fundamental objectives: the first of them, ensuring the conditions for the production and reproduction of capitalism; and the second, to ensure its legitimacy and control. For this reason the state today is a strong supporting pillar of capitalism.

The state extrapolates the political ambit and functions as an economic agent of capitalism, working to prevent or minimise the role of its crises or of the falls in its profit rates. This can happen in several ways: by granting loans to central sectors of the economy, incentivising the

[17] Errico Malatesta. A Anarquia. São Paulo: Imaginário, 2001, p. 15.

[18] Corporate associations of artisans, merchants, artists that existed in the Middle Ages.

[19] Piotr Kropotkin. O Estado e seu Papel Histórico. São Paulo: Imaginário, 2000, p. 64.

development of sectors of the economy, scrapping debts, reformulating the system of import/export, subsidising products, generating revenue through the sale of products from state-owned enterprises etc. Assistance plans also have an important role as they increase the purchasing power of sectors of the population, moving and heating the capitalist economy. Also, the state creates laws aimed at guaranteeing the long-term accumulation of the capitalists and ensuring that the capitalists' thirst for profit does not put the system itself at risk.

In the course of the historical process it was noted that there is no way of sustaining a system based only on repression. The state, which sustained itself in this way for so many years, was gradually being modified, looking to guarantee the legitimacy of capitalism. A state that clearly defends the position of the capitalists could intensify class struggle and there is therefore nothing better, from the capitalists' point of view, than to give it an aspect of neutrality. Giving it the appearance of an independent – or even autonomous – organism in relation to the ruling class or to capitalism itself. Aiming always to calm the class struggle the state developed measures in favour of the exploited classes, since with better living conditions there would be less chance of radicalism. On the other hand, organised workers movements were able to impose measure on the state that would bring them benefits, even at the expense of the capitalists.

As with representative democracy, measures that improve conditions for workers always function, for the state, as an ideological tool to pass off this idea of neutrality, independence and autonomy. However, it should serve as a lesson to show that as the state has an obligation to guarantee this legitimacy, there is often space for organised workers to impose measures in their favour. It being necessary, therefore

> [...] to snatch from the government and capitalists all the improvements of the political and economic order such that they may make the conditions of struggle less difficult for us and increase the number of those who struggle consciously. It is necessary, therefore, to snatch them by means that prepare the way for the future and do not imply the recognition of the current order[20].

Nevertheless, one should bear in mind that the state, as a strong pillar of capitalism, seeks to sustain it and, if capitalism is a system of exploitation and domination, the state cannot do anything else but sustain the class relations that exist in its midst. In this way the state defends the capitalists to the detriment of the worker, who possessing only "their arms as wealth, has nothing to expect from the state; encountering in it but an organisation designed in order to impede their emancipation at whatever price"[21].

Any attempt to change the system carried out by the exploited classes is harshly repressed by the state. When ideology does not work, repression and control follow. As it has a monopoly on the use of violence in society, it always uses it to enforce the laws, and as laws were made in order that the privileges of capitalist society could be maintained, then repression and state control are always to sustain "order". That is, to maintain the privileges of capitalism and keep the ruling class in domination. At the slightest sign of the exploited classes that signifies a threat, the state brutally represses; always aiming at the continuation of the system, which has violence as one of its central pillars.

[20] Errico Malatesta. "'Idealismo' e 'Materialismo'". In: Anarquistas, Socialistas e Comunistas. São Paulo: Cortez, 1989, p. 141. Livro em processo de reedição pela editora Scherzo.

[21] Piotr Kropotkin. "A Decomposição dos Estados". In: Palavras de um Revoltado. São Paulo: Imaginário, 2005, p.

Contrary to what the authoritarian socialists believed (and still believe), the state is not a neutral organism that can work at the service of the capitalists or of the workers. If anarchists have written so much about the state it is justifiably because the critique of capitalism was consensus between libertarians and authoritarians – the divergence was around the state. The authoritarians supported the capture of the state and the dictatorship of the proletariat as an intermediate stage – which was falsely called socialism – between capitalism and communism. This "socialism" is a form of governing of the majority by the minority, "having the effect of consolidating, directly and inevitably, the political and economic privileges of the governing minority and the economic and political slavery of the popular masses"[22]. We hold that

> [...] no state, no matter how democratic their forms may be, not even the reddest political republic, popular only in the sense of the lie known under the name of representation of the people, is able to give to these what they need, that is, the free organisation of their own interests, from the bottom up, without any interference, guardianship or coercion from above, because every state, even the most republican and democratic, even pseudo-popular [...] is nothing else, in its essence, if not the governing of the masses from top to bottom with an intellectual, and therefore privileged minority saying it understands the true interests of the people, more than the people themselves[23].

The position of the libertarians, which we hold today, is that for the construction of socialism the state must be destroyed, together with capitalism, by means of the social revolution. This because "who says state necessarily says domination and, consequently, slavery; a state without slavery, declared or concealed, is inconceivable; this is why we are enemies of the state"[24]. The state thinks it understands the needs of the people better than the people themselves and supports a hierarchical form of management of society, constituting the means by which the class present in it exercises domination over the others; those that are not part of the state. Any state creates relations of domination, exploitation, violence, wars, massacres and torture under the pretext of protecting the "citizen", as well as subjugating

> the provinces and cities that comprise the state which, as natural groups, should enjoy full and complete autonomy. [These] will, on the contrary, be governed and administrated not by themselves, as befits the associated provinces and cities, but by central authority and as conquered populations[25].

In the same way as dictatorial socialism, representative democracy argues that it is possible to have change through the state. By delegating our right to do politics[26] to a class of politicians that

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[22] Mikhail Bakunin. Estatismo e Anarquia. São Paulo: Imaginário, 2003, p. 169.

[23] Ibidem. p. 47.

[24] Ibidem. p. 212.

[25] Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. "Crítica às Constituições". In : Proudhon. São Paulo: Ática, 1986, p. 87.

[26] The term "politics" used here, and which will be used many more times throughout this text, is understood as: "derived from the adjective originated from polis (Politik) which signifies all that which refers to the city, and consequently, what is urban, civil, public and even social and sociable". Norberto Bobbio et al. Dicionário de Política. Brasília: Editora UNB, 1993, p. 954. Therefore, we do not understand politics as that performed by means of repre-

enter the state in order to represent us we are giving a mandate, without any control, to someone that makes decisions for us: there is an inevitable division between the class that does politics and the classes that follow. At the outset, we can already affirm that representative democracy alienates politically, seeing as it separates the people from those who do politics on behalf of the people: councillors, deputies, senators, mayors, governors etc. The more that the politicians are responsible for politics, the less the people engage in politics and the more they remain alienated and distant from the making of decisions. This, obviously, condemns the people to a position of spectator and not that of "master of oneself", directly responsible for solving their own problems. "The emancipation of the proletariat [...]" therefore being "impossible in any state that may exist, and that the first condition of this emancipation is the destruction of all states"[27].

"Politicians" represent the hierarchy and separation between leaders and led, within and outside of their own parties. To be elected political parties must obtain numerical relevance in the vote, and for this need to elect a significant number of candidates. Politicians are then treated as a commodity to be sold on the "electoral market"; in order to grow, parties do anything – divert money, abandon programmes, make alliances with anyone etc. "Politicians" do not do politics based on popular will, but make decisions that favour the party and its own interests, going on to increasingly like the taste of power. After all, politicians and parties want to retain their positions and powers, which becomes and end in itself. Discussion of the important issues of society, which is already limited – seeing as though parliament and the state itself are pillars of capitalism and, therefore, do not allow for its roots to be modified – is not even touched upon, is never a priority; representative democracy being conservative, limiting even the little progresses that could occur. For this reason we must not delegate politics to

> people without any conviction, who turn coats between liberals and conservatives and are allowed to influence by promises, positions, flattery or panic – this small group of nonentities who, by giving or refusing their votes, decide all the questions of the country. It is they who make or shelve laws. It is they who support or drop the ministries and change the political direction[28].

This critique of the state is not linked to one or other form of state, but to all its forms. Therefore, any project of social transformation that points to the social revolution and libertarian socialism must have the end of capitalism as well as the state as an objective. Although we hold that the state is one of the strongest pillars of capitalism, we do not believe that with the end of capitalism the state would, necessarily, cease to exist.

Today we know that we should confuse ourselves neither with the context of the nineteenth century, which showed a divergence on the question of the state between socialists – and for this the great emphasis on writings on the subject – nor with the context of the Europe of that time. We know that the conditions in Brazil are specific and, if we can apply these critiques to the state today, we must know that our reality is particular and that the direction of the world economy has had profound influence over the form of state with which we live.

Finally, one thing is sure: capitalism and the state are, still today, the foundations of our society of domination and exploitation, constituting "for all the countries of the civilised world, a single

sentative democracy. "To do politics", in this case, means to effectively participate and decide on society's issues and, especially, on that which affects us. We work with the idea that there is politics outside of the electoral sphere.

[27] Mikhail Bakunin. Estatismo e Anarquia, p. 74.

[28] Piotr Kropotkin. "O Governo Representativo". In: Palavras de um Revoltado, p. 154.

universal problem"[29]. Therefore, our ideal is still "total and definitive emancipation [...] from economic exploitation and the yoke of the state"[30].

[29] Mikhail Bakunin. Estatismo e Anarquia, p. 73.
[30] Ibid.

Final Objectives: Social Revolution and Libertarian Socialism

> We carry a new world in our hearts.
>
> **Buenaventura Durruti**

> The political and social project of anarchism is a free and anti-authoritarian society that conserves freedom, equality and solidarity between all its members.
>
> **Nestor Makhno**

> But the universal revolution is the social revolution, it is the simultaneous revolution of the people of the fields and the cities.
>
> It is this that it is necessary to organise – because without preparatory organisation, the strongest elements are impotent and void.
>
> **Mikhail Bakunin**

Having drawn a brief diagnosis of the current society of domination and exploitation, we affirm two objectives that we understand as final: the social revolution[1] and libertarian socialism. The objective of the social revolution is to destroy the society of exploitation and domination. Libertarian socialism is that which gives constructive meaning to the social revolution. Together, the destruction – as a concept of negation – and the construction – as a concept of proposition – constitute the possible and effective social transformation we propose. "There is no revolution without profound and passionate destruction, salvaging and fruitful destruction, because from it, and only by it, are new worlds created and born."[2] However, destruction alone is not enough, since "no one can wish to destroy without having at least a remote idea, real or false, of the order of things that should, in their opinion, replace that which currently exists"[3].

The social revolution is one of the possible outcomes of the class struggle and consists of the violent alteration of the established social order, and is considered by us the only way to put an end to domination and exploitation. It differs from the political revolutions of the Jacobins and Leninists by supporting the alteration of the "order" not just with a political change, through the state, exchanging one directing minority for another. As we emphasised earlier the state, for us, is not a means for the emancipation of the exploited classes, nor should it be removed from the

[1] We work with the classic conception of social revolution, developed by Bakunin, which considers it a transformation of the economic, political and social aspects of society. When we distinguish it from the political revolution we seek, in the same way, a classic differentiation that treats the political revolution as a transformation that only occurs on a "political" level, through the state.

[2] Mikhail Bakunin. Statism and Anarchy, p. 52.

[3] Idem. "Protesta de la Alianza". In: Frank Mintz (org.). Bakunin: crítica y acción. Buenos Aires: Anarres, 2006, p. 33.

hands of the capitalists, through revolutionary means, by a supposed vanguard that claims to act on behalf of the proletariat. A political revolution such as the French Revolution or the Russian Revolution, which does not terminate the state in order to produce equality in its midst, becomes a bourgeois revolution and ends, "unfailingly, in a new exploitation, wiser and more hypocritical, perhaps, but that does not lessen the oppression of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie"[4].

Unlike political revolution, social revolution is accomplished by the people of the cities and countryside who bring the class struggle and its correlation of forces with capitalism and the state to the limit, by means of popular organisation. Social revolution occurs when the social force developed in the heart of the popular organisation is greater than that of capitalism and the state and, put into practice, implants structures that support self-management and federalism; wiping out private property and the state and giving rise to a society of complete freedom and equality. It is the social revolution that will bring popular emancipation, as repeatedly stated by Bakunin:

> It is precisely this old system of organisation by force that the social revolution must end, returning complete freedom to the masses, to the communes, to the associations, to individuals themselves and destroying, once and for all, the historical cause of all violence, domination and the very existence of the state [...] [The social revolution is] the abolition of all exploitation and political oppression, juridical or administrative and governmental, including the abolition of all classes by means of the economic levelling of all wealth [...].[5]

The social revolution is not a "grand night" on which the people revolt, spontaneously, and produce a new society. It is undeniable that the class struggle produces a series of uprisings or even insurrections, spontaneous events of great importance. However, if there is no intense and hard prior organisational work these episodes will pass, sometimes with gains for the exploited classes, but they will not manage to overthrow capitalism and the state, nor give body to a new society. The construction of the popular organisation will develop the spirit of struggle and organisation in the exploited classes, seeking the accumulation of social force and incorporating within it the means to struggle in accordance with the society that we wish to build. Thus, we do not understand the social revolution as simple evolution nor as an obligatory consequence of the contradictions of capitalism, but as an episode that marks the rupture and is determined by the will of the organised exploited classes.

We emphasise that in this revolutionary process it is necessary to use violence, because we do not believe that the expropriation of the capitalists or even the destruction of the state can be accomplished without the ruling class promoting violence. In fact, the system in which we live is already a system based on violence for its maintenance, and its exacerbation during revolutionary moments only justifies the use of violence on the part of revolutionaries, primarily as a response to the violence suffered in the past and present. "Violence is only justifiable when it is necessary in order to defend oneself or others against violence."[6] The ruling class will not accept the changes

[4] Idem. "Cartas a un francés". In: Frank Mintz (org.). Bakunin: crítica y acción, p. 22.

[5] Idem. "La Comuna de Paris y la Noción del Estado" and "Estatismo e Anarquía". In: Frank Mintz (org.). Bakunin: crítica y acción, pp. 22-23. There are Portuguese translations of the two texts, done by Plínio A. Coêlho. That of Estatismo e Anarquia, in the publication already cited, and that of "A Comuna de Paris e a Noção de Estado", in the publication: Mikhail Bakunin. O Princípio do Estado e Outros Ensaios. São Paulo: Hedra, 2008.

[6] Errico Malatesta. "A Violência e a Revolução". In: Anarquistas, Socialistas e Comunistas, p. 40.

imposed on it at the moment of the realisation of the social revolution. So it is necessary to know that, although we are neither promoters nor lovers of violence, it will be necessary for the blow that we intend to deliver against this whole system of domination and exploitation.

> Since revolution, by force of circumstance, is a violent act it tends to develop the spirit of violence rather than destroy it. But the revolution conducted as conceived by anarchists is the least violent possible; it seeks to stop all violence as soon as the need to oppose, by force, the material force of the government and the bourgeoisie ceases. The anarchist ideal is to have a society in which the violence factor would have completely disappeared and this ideal serves to halt, correct and destroy this spirit of violence that the revolution, as a material act, would have the tendency to develop.[7]

The violent action of the social revolution must, at the same time as the expropriation of the capitalists immediately destroy the state, giving place to self-managed and federated structures, tried and tested within the popular organisation. Therefore, the authoritarian conception of "socialism" as an interim period in which a dictatorship is established within the state is, for us, nothing but another way to continue the exploitation of the people and must be rejected absolutely, under any circumstance.

As the social revolution must not be made only by the anarchists, it is important that we be fully inserted in the processes of class struggle in order to be able to orient the revolution towards libertarian socialism. This is because the experiences of the revolutions of the twentieth century show us that if this does not happen, the authoritarians will decimate emancipatory experiences in order to occupy the state, ending the possibility of self-management and federalism, and constituting more tyrannical regimes than the previous ones. For this reason the revolution is a risk because, if the anarchists are not sufficiently inserted to be able to give it the desired direction, they will work in order that another regime of domination and exploitation be implanted. A culture of self-management and federalism should already be well developed in the class struggles so that the people, at the revolutionary moment, do not allow themselves to be oppressed by authoritarian opportunists; and this will be through class-based practices of autonomy, combativeness, direct action and direct democracy. The more these values exist in the popular organisation, the less will be the possibility for constituting new tyrannies.

As much as we reject completely the conception of Marxist "socialism", of dictatorship in the state, it is undeniable that there would be a post-revolutionary moment of adaptation towards libertarian socialism. This may still be a time of many conflicts, and so must rely on the specific anarchist organisations – which will only merge with the social organisations at a later period of the full development of libertarian socialism, when the threat of counter-revolution has passed and libertarian socialism is in full operation.

When we treat our conception of social revolution, or even when we think of a possible future society, we want to make clear that we do not seek to determine beforehand, absolutely, how the revolutionary process or even libertarian socialism will occur. We know that there is no way to predict when this transformation will take place, and therefore any reflections must always consider this aspect of strategic projection of future possibilities from the point of possibilities,

[7] Idem. "Uma Vez Mais Sobre Anarquismo e Comunismo". In: Anarquistas Socialistas e Comunistas, p. 70.

of references, and not of absolute certainties. The characteristics of the revolutionary process depend on when and where it occurs.

Thus, the reflections explicit here about the social revolution, and especially about libertarian socialism should not be understood as formulas or predictions of what will necessarily happen. We work with the possibilities that come with our theoretical expectations. However, if on the one hand we do not want to be too assertive, on the other we think discussions about the future society and the possible functioning of libertarian socialism are important. On this point, we believe that practical revolutionary experiences have much to teach us.

To advocate libertarian socialism as a proposed future society implies, for us, relating two inseparable concepts when it comes to a political project. On the one hand socialism, a system based on social, political and economic equality, and on the other hand, freedom. For us, "socialism without freedom is slavery and brutality"[8], a system that degenerates into authoritarian regimes, as we have known well throughout the twentieth century. At the same time, "freedom without socialism is privilege, injustice"[9], a way of continuing domination and exploitation in a society of class and authoritarian hierarchies. Therefore, a project for a future society that promotes equality and freedom can only be, for us, libertarian socialism, which takes shape in the practices of self-management and federalism.

Despite being terms that have arisen at different times[10], self-management and federalism are today necessarily linked and should be understood as complementary concepts. Self-management is a form of management, a model of organisation in which decisions are made by the workers themselves, to the extent by which they are affected by them either in their workplaces or the communities where they live. Federalism is a method of linking self-managed structures, enabling decision-making on a large scale. Contemporary interpretations of self-management and federalism separate the first as the economic and the second as the political system of libertarian socialism. We do not understand the separation between the economic and the political in this way when it comes to self-management and federalism.

The self-managed and federalist society of libertarian socialism has as one of its goals the alienation and ending of the relations of domination and exploitation of labour. The critique of work today, including by libertarians, is for us a critique of work within capitalism and not a critique of work as such. Under libertarian socialism free labour should be a means of liberation for workers who, through self-management, will bring back to themselves the wealth that they have been usurped of by capitalist private ownership. Thus, the socialisation of labour, of the products of labour, the means of production, the forms, rhythms and tempos of work would contribute to the creation of a model of work as the "intelligent action of men in society with the preconceived end of personal satisfaction"[11]. In the new society all those that are able to would need to work, there no longer being unemployment, and the work would be able to be performed in accordance with personal ability and disposition. People will no longer be obliged to accept

[8] Mikhail Bakunin. Federalismo, Socialismo e Antiteologismo. São Paulo: Cortez, 1988, p. 38.

[9] Ibidem.

[10] The term "federalism" has been used by anarchists since Proudhon, who formalised his theories about the subject in Do Princípio Federativo of 1863, and other books. Federalism marked the libertarian socialists of the twentieth century, primarily those that acted in the IWA. Do not confuse this libertarian federalism with statist federalism. The term "self-management" arose only a century later, in the 1960s to substitute others like self-government, self-administration, autonomy etc. Today, the two have different meanings, possessing a complementary meaning in economy and politics.

[11] Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. De la création de l'ordre dans l'humanité. In: A Nova Sociedade, p. 26.

anything under threat of experiencing want and not attaining their minimum living conditions. Children, the elderly and those unable to work will be assured a dignified life without depravation, all their needs being met. For the most tedious tasks or those perceived as unpleasant, in some cases, there could be rotations or alternations. Even in the case of the carrying out of production, where the co-ordination of some specialists is needed, rotations in function and a commitment to the training of other workers with similar skills will also be necessary for more complex tasks.

Under libertarian socialism, it will no longer be possible to have power or higher remuneration by reason of being the owner of one or more means of production. This is because private property would have been abolished, giving place to the collective ownership of the means of production, which can be thought of in two ways: 1.) no one would effectively be the owner and the means of production belong to the collectivity as a whole, or 2.) all the members of the collectivity will be owners of a portion of the means of production, in exactly the same proportions as the others. "The means of production being the collective work of humanity, they have to go back to the human collectivity from which they came."[12] In a system of collective ownership; rights, responsibilities, wages and wealth no longer have a relation with private property and the old class relations, based on private property, must also disappear. Libertarian socialism is, therefore, a classless society. The ruling class will no longer exist and the whole system of inequality, domination and exploitation will have disappeared.

In the cities there are different types of workers. Firstly, there are those that perform activities with simple tools, with almost no division of labour in which production can be performed, often, by just one worker. For this type of worker collective work is not a necessity, but it is desirable since it saves time and labour, besides helping a worker to enhance themselves with the skills of others. Then, there are other workers who perform their activities collectively, with relatively simple tools and machines in small companies or factories. Finally, a third category of workers of large companies and industries in which the division of labour is enormous, structured to produce on a large scale with high technology and large capital investments. For the latter two categories collective work is absolutely necessary due to the nature of the work itself, since all the technology, machinery and tooling must be collective. Thus,

> every workshop, every factory will therefore organise itself into an association of workers, which will be free for them to organise in the way they see fit, provided individual rights are guaranteed and that the principles of equality and justice are put into practice. […] Wherever an industry needs complex equipment and collective labour, ownership should also be collective.[13]

In the country there could be two situations: that of peasants that have worked on large properties that must be collectivised in the same way as the large companies and factories; and that of peasants that would prefer to have their own slice of the land and cultivate it themselves. In this mixed economy,

> […] the main purpose of the revolution was achieved: the land has become the property of those that work it and peasants no longer work for the profit of an exploiter

[12] Piotr Kropotkin. "As Nossas Riquezas". In: A Conquista do Pão, p. 30.

[13] James Guillaume. "Ideas on Social Organization". In: Daniel Guérin. No Gods, No Masters. San Francisco: AK Press, 1998, p. 213.

> that lives from their suffering. With this great victory obtained the rest is of secondary importance. The peasants can, if they choose, divide the land into individual parcels and give a portion to each family. Or they could instead institute common ownership and the co-operative cultivation of the land.[14]

It is important to mention that we do not consider state ownership as collective. For us, collective ownership is self-managed by the people, and not managed by the state which, when it centralises ownership – as in the case of the USSR, for example – does nothing more than become a state employer that continues to exploit workers. But in the case of the persistence of the individual property of the peasants, of those that work the land themselves, it would be more appropriate to understand this situation not as property, but as possession. Thus, property would always be collective, and possession individual. Possession because the value of the land would be in its use, and not trade. And relations with this would be guided by the needs of the producer and no longer that of the market. Such a situation alters everything, so it is necessary to establish a new category.

There is still a fundamental question that should complement the end of private ownership on the path to equality, and that is the end of inheritance with the goal of preventing any kind of accumulation that has consequences on the starting point early on in one's life. So, true equality is a goal, since

> while inheritance exists there will be hereditary economic inequality; not the natural inequality of individuals but the artificial inequality of classes, and this will always be necessarily translated into the hereditary inequality of development and of the culture of the *intelligencia*, and will continue to be the source of the consecration of all political and social inequalities.[15]

The economy of libertarian socialism is conducted by workers and consumers. The workers create the social product and the consumers enjoy it. In these two functions, mediated by distribution, the people are responsible for economic and political life, having to decide what to produce, and the consumers what to consume. The local structures of libertarian socialism in which workers and consumers organise themselves are the workers' and consumers' councils.

Councils are social bodies, vehicles through which the people express their political and economic preferences and exercise self-management and federalism. In them daily political and economic activities are decided and carried out.

Each workplace will be able to be managed by a workers' council in which all workers have the same rights, the same responsibilities and decide its management equally, since there is no hierarchy. If necessary smaller councils could be formed by staff, teams, small divisions or even larger councils for big divisions, work locations or industries. In these councils the workers and others involved in the production process make all the decisions.

Consumers can organise themselves into consumers' councils that occur within the communities. Thus individuals are organised in families, these into block and then neighbourhood committees, and so on. These councils would be responsible for pointing out to the producers what

[14] Ibidem. p. 210.

[15] Mikhail Bakunin. Federalismo, Socialismo e Antiteologismo, p. 37.

they would like to consume, as we believe that it is need that must guide production, and not vice versa.

The workers' council organises production and the consumers' council organises consumption. Obviously, this explanation aims to be instructive on the reality and problems that are likely to mobilise the future self-managed society; but, once in this new context, the consumers will also be the workers themselves, and the task of the councils will therefore occur more easily, since profit will no longer be the imperative in the relations of production.

Under libertarian socialism the workers' councils might still not have eliminated the separation between manual and intellectual work, and this should be done as soon as possible. The argument which holds that both manual and intellectual work are important, and that, therefore, they should be equally recognised and rewarded is not true. Many tasks, primarily those involving manual labour are completely unpleasant, harsh and alienating, and it is not fair that some workers are fully occupied with them, while others are dedicated to performing enjoyable, pleasurable, stimulating and intellectual tasks. If this happens then certainly the class system will be rebuilt, no longer based on private property, but on a class of intellectuals that will command, and another of manual workers that will execute the commands.

Seeking to end this separation the workers' councils could have a balanced set of tasks for each worker, which would be equivalent for all. Thus, each worker will be responsible for some pleasant and stimulating tasks, that involve intellectual work, and other harsher and more alienating tasks, that involve manual labour. This does not mean that everyone will be doing everything at the same time, but that everyone performs a set of tasks that, when compared, have the same level of intellectual and manual labour. In practice this process would function, for example, with a worker in a school that performs the task of a teacher for some of the time, but also that of the cleaner. Or someone that works in industrial research part of the time, and the rest of the time helping with the manual labour of production. Another person could work the whole time in a job that involves some manual and intellectual activities.

Obviously the scheme is simplified, but the idea is that all the workers of each council have the same level of manual and intellectual work, according to a ratio of time devoted to the execution of tasks and the level of these tasks (manual and intellectual labour). It is important that the councils also have between them equivalent levels of manual and intellectual work, so that a worker from one council has a balanced set of tasks similar to that of another. If eventually there are only manual tasks in a given council, then the worker must work in more than one council.

That is, both internally as well as between the councils one should seek an equivalent level of manual and intellectual labour in the set performed by each worker, which may have one, two or many other tasks. This would obviously mean a decline in productivity, but we shall see later how other elements of the future society would compensate for this.

> The goal is not to eliminate the division of labour, but to ensure that people should take responsibility for a sensible sequence of tasks for which, most of the time, they have been properly trained and that no one enjoys constant benefits, in terms of effects of the training for their work. [...] Everyone has a set of tasks that together make up their job, so that the full implication of the entire set of tasks is, on average,

[16] Michael Albert. PARECON. London: Verso, 2003, pp. 104-106. For a discussion on complex balanced tasks see this book pp. 103-111.

> like all the implications for the enabling of all other works. [...] Every worker has a job. Every job has many tasks. The tasks are adjusted to the workers and vice versa.[16]

The goal in libertarian socialist remuneration is that it be guided by the communist principle "from each according to their ability, to each according to their need". However, we understand that to implement this principle libertarian socialism should already be in full function, with production in abundance. Until this is possible, remuneration can be done according to work, or effort – this being understood as personal sacrifice for the collective benefit. Remuneration by labour or effort would mean that everyone that has a balanced set of tasks would receive the same and could choose how to spend it. Some would prefer to acquire a thing or two, others would prefer to invest in leisure, free time, less stressful work etc. A model that is closer to the classic collectivism advocated by the federalists who worked in the IWA of the nineteenth century.

For us, therefore, it would be a case of functioning collectivism, using the maxim "from each according to their ability, to each according to their labour", and, at the moment in which it becomes possible apply the communist principle, giving "to each according to their need". In fact this "becomes a secondary issue, since the question of property has been resolved and there are no longer capitalists that appropriate the labour of the masses"[17].

The market would be abolished and in its place put the self-managed planning system, with pricing being done between the workers' and consumers' councils, along with their federations and associations which would facilitate this interaction. This planning model differs from the authoritarian form where states plan the economies in the "socialist" countries. It would enable the workers and consumers themselves to decide completely on distribution, wiping out the problem of competition.

For all this to work we believe the role played by technology to be fundamental. Unlike some libertarian tendencies which believe that technology contains in itself the germ of domination, we believe that without it there is no possibility for the development of libertarian socialism. With the advent of technology and it being used in favour of labour, not capital, there would surely be a gain in productivity and consequently a significant reduction in the labour time of people, who could use this time for other activities. These technologies could also be regarded as "the marvellous application of science in production, [...] whose mission it is to emancipate the worker, relieving human labour [and constituting] a progress of which civilised man is justly proud"[18]. Obviously, we understand that there are good and bad technologies and that, therefore, society

> need not reject advanced technologies on a large scale, but shift them, really necessitating further development of technology [in agreement] with ecological principles, which will contribute to a new harmonisation of society and the natural world.[19]

This concern with using technology that is in accordance with the environment should be considered in all spheres of the future society, meeting the demands of a social ecology.

To defend this ecological consciousness does not mean that human beings would be constrained by a system of natural laws, since man is part of nature and as such should not be

[17] James Guillaume. Op. Cit. p. 211.

[18] Mikhail Bakunin. Federalismo, Socialismo e Antiteologismo, p. 18.

[19] Murray Bookchin. "Um Manifesto Ecológico: o poder de destruir, o poder de criar". In: Letra Livre 31, p. 8.

subjected to it. Obviously we also do not hold that the relationship of domination between human beings and nature should continue. On the contrary, it must cease as soon as possible and give way to an egalitarian relationship between humans and nature.

Ecological consciousness should be developed from the time of struggles that precede the revolutionary rupture and in the future society itself, based on the relations of mutual aid theorised by Kropotkin. This development could have as a principle reference the premise that we, human beings, are an integral part of nature "which becomes consciousness of itself", as Reclus put it.

Human beings differ from other natural elements and other species by establishing social relations with everything surrounding them, because they possess the capacity to think about themselves, to make theories about reality, and with these aptitudes have managed to drastically modify the environmental setting that is their surroundings. In this way the capitalist system, by the very reason of its existence, means that the capitalists exploit natural resources in a way in which these cannot regenerate themselves at their natural rate. In the future society this will no longer be able to happen. The development of human beings brought about by libertarian socialism should stress the importance of the relations of mutual aid between species and nature.

It is worth emphasising that our ecological proposals differ radically from "conservationism" and "primitivism". From the former, because this means the maintenance of class society and the complete commodification of nature. From the latter, because we consider the "anti-civilisation" proposal a complete absurdity, seeking a romantic return to a distant past or, even worse, a kind of suicide of all humanity and a negation of all our contributions to the maintenance and well-being of nature.

We believe that a society that completely respects the principles of social ecology will only be possible at the moment in which capitalism and the state give way to libertarian socialism. Therefore, with libertarian socialism we hope to harmonise society and the environment again, considering that "if we were not capable of founding an ecological society it is, besides the disastrous consequences that would result therefrom, our moral legitimacy that would be at stake"[20].

With the use of technology in favour of workers and its development; with the end of capitalist exploitation and the fruits of labour going completely to the workers; with full employment in place workers will have more time that could be spent in three ways. First, with the natural loss of productivity that the balanced set of tasks will cause, seeing that it will "de-specialise" labour a bit. Second, with political decisions, which will demand time for discussions and deliberations that would have to be made in the self-managed workplace and community. Finally, with the remaining time – and we think that with these changes time off will be much greater than that of today – everyone will be able to choose what to do: rest, leisure, education, culture etc.

Decisions under self-management do not have to obey a specific model. The workers' and consumers' councils can choose the best application of direct democracy, horizontal discussions and deliberations being fundamental, with the clear exposition of ideas and the discussion of questions presented. Clearly, consensus should not be used in the majority of decisions, since it is very inefficient – especially if we think about decisions on a large scale – besides giving a lot of power to isolated agents that could block consensus or have a lot of impact on a decision in which they are a minority. Questions can be decided on by vote, after due debate, it being variable as to whether who wins is who has 50% +1 of the votes, or if who wins is who has 2/3

[20] Idem. Sociobiologia ou Ecologia Social? Rio de Janeiro: Achiamé, s/d, p. 71.

of the votes, and so on. We must bear in mind that the decision-making process is a means and not an end in itself and, therefore, we also have to concern ourselves with agility in this process.

In the decision-making process self-management and federalism imply direct democracy with the participation of everyone, collective decisions, delegation with imperative mandate, rotation and recallability of functions, access to information and equal decision-making power. Both worker and consumer councils would use self-management as a form of management and decision-making, both in the workplaces and in the communities. Federalism would link both labour as well as the communities, allowing for decisions to be made on a large scale. "Federation, from the Latin foedus, genitive foederis, means pact, contract, treaty, convention, alliance"[21], in which those that are organised "are equally bound to one another for one or more particular objective, the burden of which falls specifically and exclusively on the delegates of the federation"[22].

The linkages within federalism would permit decision-making on a large scale, from the smallest instances of self-management to the most extensive. In the work environment federalism would link units, small divisions, large divisions, workplaces or even entire industries. In the communities federalism would link families, neighbours, blocks, neighbourhoods, cities, regions or even countries. These linkages would be performed by delegates that would articulate and discuss the positions deliberated in the councils. Delegates that would have imperative mandates, that is, they would represent the collective positions of the councils and not their own positions, as occurs under representative democracy. In addition, the delegates' mandates would not be fixed and would be revocable at any time. Since "the federalist system is the opposite of hierarchy or administrative and governmental centralism"[23], we believe that it would be responsible for the structure that would replace the state and through which, together with the self-managed councils, politics would take place under libertarian socialism. The councils, as voluntary associations,

> would take on an even greater extent in order to replace the state and all its functions. They would represent an interwoven network, composed of an infinite variety of groups and federations of all sizes and levels, local, regional, national and international, temporary or more-or-less permanent – for all possible purposes: production, consumption and exchange, communications, sanitation, education, mutual protection, defence of the region and so on; and, on the other hand, for the satisfaction of a number of increasingly scientific, artistic, literary and social needs.[24]

In this way the state and representative democracy would depart and self-management and federalism would take their place; and politics would take its proper place, which is in the midst of the people, there no longer being the separation between those that do politics and those that don't – since under libertarian socialism it would be the members of society themselves that would realise politics on a daily basis.

Consciousness should accompany the pace of growth of struggles and be stimulated by pedagogic processes whenever possible. Besides not believing that in order to make the revolution all

[21] Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. Do Princípio Federativo. São Paulo: Imaginário, 2001, p. 90.
[22] Ibidem.
[23] Ibidem. p. 91.
[24] Piotr Kropotkin. "Anarchism". In: The Encyclopaedia Britannica.

the people must be educated we recognise that, at the moment of the social revolution, the higher the level of consciousness of the people, the better. Increasingly, society should develop its culture in a libertarian direction and this should not only happen at the moment of the social revolution and after it; but already at the moment of struggle, of the construction and the development of the popular organisation. It is undeniable that ideology, already transformed into the culture that capitalism has introduced into popular imagination, will have to be undone bit-by-bit and this will occur through a long process of popular education. Positions such as racial and gender prejudice, patriarchy, individualism etc. will have to be combated as much as possible, both in the processes of struggle as well as at the moment of social revolution or even afterwards. Under libertarian socialism we understand that self-management and federalism will have to contribute to this process in practice. Besides this, one should invest heavily in educational and cultural activities for the whole of society, stimulating "teaching [that] should be equal in all ways for everyone; and consequently must be integral"[25], providing theoretical and practical knowledge for children and adults of both sexes.

Thus, we believe that the system of domination and exploitation of the state and capitalism will have been ended – no longer will anyone accumulate power thanks to the social force obtained by the exploitation of other people – and the new system will support itself on the pillars of social, political and economic equality and freedom. An equality that will occur with the establishment of collective ownership, self-managed councils, balanced sets of tasks, equal pay, self-managed planning, collective decisions, and the constant struggle against prejudice and discrimination. Freedom both in relation to the system of domination and exploitation, as well as in relation to what we wish to attain. A freedom that will be collective, considering each one free to the extent that all others are free; "freedom that consists of the full development of all material, intellectual and moral potential that is found in a state of latent faculty in everyone"[26]. Libertarian socialism will bring a luxury ignored by everyone: "the luxury of humanity, the happiness of the full development and freedom of each one in the equality of all"[27].

[25] Mikhail Bakunin. A Instrução Integral, p. 78.

[26] Idem. "A Comuna de Paris e a Noção de Estado". In: O Princípio do Estado e Outros Ensaios, pp. 114-115.

[27] Idem. "Moral Revolucionária". In: Conceito de Liberdade. Porto: Rés Editorial, s/d, p. 203.

Organisation and Social Force

> [...] ten, twenty or thirty men, understanding well, being well-organised and who know where they are going, will easily carry one hundred, two hundred or even more.
>
> **Mikhail Bakunin**

Previously we dealt with that which we understand as the organisation of capitalism and the state, seeking to map out "where we are"; and the organisation of libertarian socialism, trying to specify "where we want to reach". To complete the discussion on organisation it will be necessary to expand a bit on social movements and the popular organisation, as well as on the specific anarchist organisation; two different levels of action that will seek to answer [the question], "how do we think we can leave where we are and arrive where we want to be", completing indispensable elements for our permanent strategy. As Malatesta nicely summarised, "[...] organisation in general as the principle and condition of social life, today, and in the future society; organisation of the anarchist party and organisation of popular forces"[1].

For us, the social transformation we want to take place passes, necessarily, through the construction of the popular organisation, through the progressive increase in its social force until the moment at which it would be possible to overthrow capitalism and the state with social revolution and open the way to libertarian socialism. Furthermore, we argue that the popular organisation must be accompanied by a parallel development of the specific anarchist organisation, which should influence it, giving to it the desired character. Going forward we will have further discussions on each of these and on the interaction between one another. At the moment, what is essential is for us to assume that there is no way of thinking about this necessary transformation without organisation and the progressive growth of social force.

We understand today's society as the result of a relationship of forces, or even a permanent conflict – which takes the form of class struggle – between capitalism, the state and other diverse political forces; and that the former are strengthened, that is, manage to have a greater social force than the latter and, thus, establish power. In this sense capitalism and the state exert oppression over other political forces that constitute resistance to them.

This resistance can occur in different ways, some constituting greater or smaller political forces, and others not constituting political forces. "Resistance can be passive (when the agent has no action against the power that represses them) or active (when the power suffers retaliations on the part of the subjugated); isolated (it has an individual character) or articulated (collective force)"[2]. Passive resistance does not constitute a political force and isolated resistance possesses little social force. Therefore, in order to attain our objectives we advocate active and articulated

[1] Errico Malatesta. "A Organização I". In: Escritos Revolucionários. São Paulo, Imaginário, 2000, p. 49. For Malatesta anarchist party is the same thing as the specific anarchist organisation.

[2] Fabio López López. Poder e Domínio: uma visão anarquista, p. 75.

resistance which seeks in organisation the permanent increase of social force. For the construction of this resistance it is necessary to align with those that are in agreement with our proposal for social transformation.

> If we want to move forward, if we want to do something more than that which permanently isolates each one of us, we must know with which particular comrades we can be in agreement, and with which we disagree. This is especially necessary when we speak of action, of movement, of methods with which it is necessary to work with many hands in order to be able to obtain some results that go in our direction[3].

What we can today call "order" or status-quo is the organisation of capitalism and the state, which may or may not consider other political forces that provide a threat. To be disorganised, poorly organised or isolated means not to constitute an adequate resistance to capitalism and the state and, consequently, not managing to significantly increase the social force of the organisation that must have as an objective to replace them with libertarian socialism. We can say that "whoever doesn't organise themselves, who doesn't seek the co-operation of others and does not offer theirs under conditions of reciprocity and solidarity, puts themselves necessarily in a state of inferiority and remains an unconscious gear in the social mechanism that others operate in their way, and to their advantage"[4]. Disorganisation, poor organisation and isolation, in fact, end up supporting capitalism and the state – seeing as though they do not allow for the construction of the necessary social force. By not taking part, in an appropriate manner, in the relation of force or the permanent conflict of society you end up reproducing "order". Thus, "if we do not seek well articulated organisation and association we will end up not managing to exercise any influence in struggles, and consequently in today's society"[5]. Thus,

> those that do not have the means or sufficiently developed consciousness to organise themselves freely with those who have interests and sentiments in common, suffer the organisation built by other individuals, generally constituted into a ruling class or group in order to exploit, for their own benefit, the labour of others. And the age-old oppression of the masses by a small number of privileged people has always been the consequence of the inability of most individuals to put themselves in agreement and organise themselves with other workers for the production, enjoyment and eventual defence against those that want to exploit and oppress them. [...] To remain isolated, each one acting or wanting to act on their own, without understanding with others, without preparation, without uniting the weak forces of individuals into a powerful bunch means to condemn oneself to impotence, wasting one's own energy on small acts without efficiency and rapidly losing faith in the objective and falling into complete inaction[6].

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[3] Luigi Fabbri. "A Organização Anarquista". In: Anarco-Comunismo Italiano. São Paulo, Luta Libertária, s/d, p. 109.

[4] Errico Malatesta. "A Organização das Massas Operárias Contra o Governo e os Patrões". In: Escritos Revolucionários, p. 39.

[5] FARJ. "A Propriedade é um Roubo". In: Protesta! 4, p. 7.

[6] Errico Malatesta. "La Organización". Exert from Pensiero e Volontà, 16 of May, 1925. In: Vernon Richards. Op. Cit. pp. 83-85.

Disorganisation and poor organisation are reproduced on the social level – of social movements, in which one should build and develop the popular organisation – with the difficulty of accumulating social force, causing the natural spontaneity of this level not to manage to carry out the set of desired social transformations. At the political level – of anarchism, in which one should develop the specific anarchist organisation – with the difficulty of influencing the social level to have adequate ways and means. Isolation and individualism causes that neither the political nor social levels exist in a desirable manner, articulating neither the popular nor anarchist organisation. Besides this disorganisation, poor organisation and isolation are hindering factors for the establishment of libertarian socialism, as we believe that it can only be built with a lot of organisation.

Organisation means the co-ordination of forces, or "association with a common objective and with the necessary ways and means to achieve this objective"[7]. In this way, we must think of ways and means for the popular organisation such that it can overthrow capitalism and the state, and, by means of the social revolution build libertarian socialism – its objective. At the same time, we must think of ways and means for the specific anarchist organisation such that this can build the popular organisation and influence it, giving to it the desired character and arriving at libertarian socialism by means of the social revolution – its objective. Next we discuss in more detail these two levels of organisation. Firstly we we will discuss the social level, in which social movements operate and in which we must seek to build the popular organisation. Then the political level and the development of the specific anarchist organisation.

When we speak about social force it is important for us to define what we understand by this term. We believe that every individual, as the social agent that they are, naturally possesses a social force that is the energy that can be applied in order to achieve their objectives. This force varies from one person to another and even in the same person over a period of time. To achieve their objectives, individuals frequently make use of instruments that can increase their social force. Many things can be used to increase social force, such as: weapons, information, training, adequate techniques, resource optimisation, persuasion, machines etc. However, the most important instrument for this is organisation; which can happen in an authoritarian way, by means of domination, or in a libertarian way, by means of free association.

In an authoritarian organisation the social force of diverse agents (for example in the state with an army, or in a company with salaried labour) is alienated, putting them in a position of domination in relation to the organisation (in these cases the state and the boss), and causing them to contribute to an alien objective, different to their own. This is exactly how the social force of the current system is constituted today, that is, by means of the alienation of diverse agents that contribute to the goals of capitalism, which are not the same as theirs. In a libertarian organisation it is free association, or anti-authoritarian organisation, that produces the increase of social force – it always being associated with other instruments.

Organisation that takes the form of free association is indispensable to our project of social transformation because, when individuals work together, their social force is not simply the sum of individual forces, but much more than this. We look at the example of Proudhon in order to explain the matter. "Two hundred workers set the obelisk of Luxor on its base in a few hours; do you suppose that one man could have accomplished the same task in two hundred days?[8].

[7] Idem. "A Organização I". In: Escritos Revolucionários, p. 51.

[8] Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. "1ere. Memoire sur la Proprieté". In: A Nova Sociedade, p. 35.

Certainly not, because there is an "immense strength that results from the union and harmony of workers, of the convergence and concurrence of their efforts"[9]. In the example above the organisation of the workers gave them a collective force, enabling a greater result than the simple sum of individual results. Thus, we can conclude that to be able to carry out our project of social transformation association is fundamental because it is through it, and only through it, that we will be able to accumulate the social force necessary to overthrow capitalism and the state.

However, for the necessary permanent gain in social force that must occur in this anti-authoritarian form of organisation, both at the level of popular organisation as well as at the level of the anarchist organisation, we recognise to be fundamental

> [...] a certain discipline, not automatic, but voluntary and reflected, being perfectly in accord with the freedom of individuals, was and will be necessary whenever many individuals, freely united, undertake a collective job or action. This discipline is no more than the voluntary and reflected agreement of all individual efforts towards a common end. At the moment of action, in the midst of struggle, roles are divided naturally according to the aptitudes of each one, appreciated and judged by the whole collective: some direct and order, others execute orders. But no function is petrified, neither is it fixed nor irrevocably linked to any person. Levels and hierarchical promotion do not exist, such that the commander of yesterday may be the subordinate of today. No one is elevated above the others, or, if they are elevated, it is only to fall in the next instant, as waves in the sea, always returning to a healthy level of equality[10].

Obviously this discipline must not "follow the authoritarian model, both in the oppression of members [...] as well as by way [of] charges, that [...] should also consider respect and ethics. [...] It is a great concern for us to differentiate the self-discipline that we promote here from military discipline, exploitative and oppressive in essence and that, from our point of view, does not follow different paths to other authoritarianisms that we know well"[11]. In order to differentiate the discipline much preached by the authoritarians from the discipline that we advocate, we choose to use the term self-discipline, affirming that "self-discipline is the motor of the self-managed organisation"[12]; it being for us, together with commitment and responsibility, indispensable for the construction of an anti-authoritarian organisation that aims to increase its social force. This self-discipline, in our view, is less in the popular organisation and greater in the specific anarchist organisation, varying according to the context. In periods of greater social turbulence the need for this self-discipline increases. In times of ebb, it can be smaller.

For us, as we have emphasised, the objective of the popular organisation as a form of active and articulated resistance is, progressively increasingly its social force, "to overthrow capitalism and the state and, by means of the social revolution, to build libertarian socialism". This increase of social force can be achieved with various instruments, but primarily the organisation of the exploited classes with the greatest number of people possible and a good level of organisation – which necessarily implies self-discipline, commitment and responsibility. Moreover, as we have

[9] Ibid.

[10] Mikhail Bakunin. "Táctica e Disciplina do Partido Revolucionário". In: Conceito de Liberdade, pp. 198-199.

[11] FARJ. "Reflexões Sobre o Comprometimento, a Responsabilidade e a Autodisciplina".

[12] Ibid.

also already defined, the objective of the specific anarchist organisation is “to build the popular organisation and influence it, giving to it the desired character, and to arrive at libertarian socialism by means of the social revolution”. For this the specific organisation must constitute itself as an organisation of active anarchist minority with a high level of self-discipline, commitment and responsibility. Conceived in this way, “organisation, far from creating authority, is the only remedy against it and the only means by which each one of us becomes accustomed to taking an active and conscious part in the collective work”[13].

[13] Errico Malatesta. ”A Organização II”. In: Escritos Revolucionários, p. 59.

Social Movements and the Popular Organisation

> It is the people themselves, the hungry, the dispossessed that have to abolish misery.
>
> **Ricardo Flores Magón**

> To organise the people's forces in order to realise the [social] revolution, is the only end for those who sincerely desire freedom.
>
> **Mikhail Bakunin**

> To favour popular organisations of all kinds is the logical consequence of our fundamental ideas and, thus, should be an integral part of our programme.
>
> **Errico Malatesta**

We have mentioned the popular organisation and our expectations in relation to it a few times before. We have already defined that its objective is "to overthrow capitalism and the state, and, by means of the social revolution, to build libertarian socialism", and by this we understand it as true protagonist in the process of social transformation. We also mentioned that the level at which social movements develop and in which we must seek to build and increase the social force of the popular organisation is what we call the social level. At this point we aim to discuss social movements, their desired characteristics and methods of action, as well as how they can contribute to the construction of the development of the popular organisation.

In dealing with this social level we must think of the possibilities of the people, who must be the grand agent of the social change we propose. It is undeniable that there is a latent social force in the exploited classes, but we understand that it is only through organisation that this force can leave the camp of possibilities and become a real social force. The question arises, then, as follows:

> It is true that there is [in the people] a great elementary force, a force that without any doubt is superior to [that of] the government, and to [that of] the ruling classes taken together; but without organisation an elementary force is not a real force. It is this indisputable advantage of organised force over the elementary force of the people on which is based the force of the state. Thus, the problem is not knowing whether they [the people] can rise up, but whether they are capable of building an organisation that gives them the means to arrive at a victorious end – not by a fortuitous victory, but a prolonged and final triumph.[1]

[1] Mikhail Bakunin. "Needs of the Organisation." In: Concept of Freedom, p.136.

Starting with organisation and its practical application in the field this force grows exponentially, offering a real chance to combat capitalism and the state. This because "we have with us justice, rights, but our strength is still not enough"[2]. As we said earlier, it will be the permanent increase of the social force of the organisation of the exploited classes that will be able to provide the desired social transformation.

For the construction of an organisation that gives us the means to reach the desired ends – social revolution and libertarian socialism – consolidating the victory, we advocate a model for the creation and development of what we call the popular organisation.

Firstly, we justify organisation conforming to what we have previously defined; it being the "co-ordination of forces or 'association with a common objective and with the necessary ways and means to achieve this objective'". We have also already said that organisation multiplies the social force of the people and it is only through it that we can offer an opposition capable of overthrowing capitalism and the state. This model of organisation that we assert is fruit of the free association of members of the exploited classes.

> By association they [the workers] instruct themselves, mutually inform one another and put an end, by their own efforts, to this fatal ignorance that is one of the principal causes of their slavery. By association they learn to help oneself, to know oneself, to help one another, and eventually to create a more formidable force than that of all the bourgeois capitalists and of all the political powers together.[3]

In second place, we justify this organisation as being popular, giving it a combative class struggle characteristic. In other words, the whole category of the exploited classes must be mobilised in this model of organisation, as defined above. The involvement of all the sectors that suffer in the harshest way the impacts of capitalism is, therefore, a priority. When the organisation has a class character this stimulates and empowers the class struggle. In this way the popular organisation is built from the bottom up, from the "periphery to the centre", and outside of the power centres of the current system.

The popular organisation is built by means of the will of the people's struggle. Thus it is not the fruit of a spontaneous movement, even while knowing that many expressions of the class struggle arise spontaneously. It is also necessary because we do not believe – differently to that which many socialists argued in the nineteenth century – that capitalist society is headed towards its own end, or that socialism is the result of a natural evolution of capitalism. It seems quite clear to us that we must think of an organisational model as a tool of struggle, for otherwise capitalism and the state will not cease to exist.

We understand the popular organisation as the result of a process of convergence of diverse social organisations and different grassroots movements, which are fruit of the class struggle. For this reason we believe that we should favour all kinds of organisations and movements of this type, understanding this support as the consequence of our most fundamental ideas. These organisations and movements were called "mass movements" in the past, but the authoritarian side of socialism ended up giving to the term "masses" the connotation of "mass of pawns", of a movement without consequence that should be directed and guided by a vanguard, which would

[2] Idem. The Dual Strike of Geneva. Sao Paulo: Imaninário/ Faísca, 2007, p. 94.

[3] Ibid. p. 90.

be organised in a verticalised party. That is, the authoritarians treated the mass movements from a hierarchical perspective, seeking to dominate them.

We consider social and popular participation in the process of social transformation essential. Mass movements can be called social organisations, popular movements, but also social movements – a term we will use going forward.

A social movement is an association of people and/ or of entities that have common interests in the defence or promotion of determined objectives before society. These movements can be in the most different places in society and have the most different banners of struggle, that show the needs of those around the movement, a common cause. As we have seen today's society provides the largest portion of society with a situation of suffering and of deprivation and this often serves as a factor of association, which gives body to the organisations that defend the interests of the people.

> Through the organisations founded for the defence of their interests workers acquire consciousness of the oppression in which they find themselves, and from the antagonism that divides them from the bosses [or from the ruling class] start to desire a better life, habituating themselves to collective struggle and solidarity and being able to win those improvements that are compatible with the persistence of the state and capitalist regime.[4]

Social movements are fruit of a tripod comprised of necessity, will and organisation. This tripod motivates the creation of diverse social movements around the world; and this is no different in Brazil. Here there are landless, homeless, unemployed and community movements, and movements for affordable and quality transport. There are movements of recyclable waste collectors, the indigenous, students, human rights, labour, feminists, blacks, gays, of popular councils, artistic, cultural, environmental, among others. These movements have in common the fact that they arose out of the domination and exploitation of the society in which we live; many of them being fruit of the class struggle.

However, there are not a lot of social movements that seek to build the popular organisation or even to combat capitalism and the state. Many of them are imbued with the characteristics and values of capitalist society and, more than that, often propagate these characteristics and values. The majority of these movements, which we could call reformist, believe that there is a solution to their questions under capitalism. That is, the end for a large part of these movements is the attainment of short term gains, within capitalism, and nothing more. Besides this, in the majority of cases, social movements are not properly articulated between themselves and each carry out their own struggle, without articulation between them. Therefore, they do not even point to the start of the construction of the popular organisation. This shows that although there are a number of social movements, the fact is that their characteristics and ways of acting are not, in large part, in accordance with that which we think to be appropriate. The means that are being chosen do not lead to the ends advocated by us.

The social movements that we defend, and which we think are contributing to our political project, share certain characteristics and ways of doing things.

[4] Errico Malatesta. "Los Anarquistas y los Movimientos Obreroa". Excerpt from Il Risveglio 1-15 out. 1927. In: Vernon Richards. Op. Cit. p. 111.

They are the strongest possible, with good organisation and the greatest number of people being focused on the struggle that they have decided as priority. So, a movement of the landless should encompass all those that are willing to struggle for land, a movement of the homeless must embrace all those that are willing to struggle for housing and so on. Thus, we believe that social movements should not fit and lock themselves within an ideology, whatever it may be. We do not believe in anarchist, Marxist or social-democratic social movements, or those of any other specific ideology. Therefore, people from the most diverse ideologies must "fit" in the social movements that we are prepared to create or develop. For us, an anarchist social movement, or one of any other ideology, would only tend to split the class of the exploited, or even those that are interested in struggling for a particular cause. That is, the force that must drive the creation and the development of social movements is necessity, and not ideology. So "no philosophical or political theory must enter as an essential basis, and as an official condition required in the programme […]. But this does not imply that all political and philosophical issues […] cannot and should not be freely discussed."[5]

Although we believe that social movements should not [be made to] fit within anarchism, we think that anarchism must, as far as possible, be spread within social movements. Going forward we will discuss how this should be done and with what objective. For now, suffice it to say that the social movements which we advocate are not and should not be anarchist, but, rather, are fertile ground for anarchism.

Similarly do we think of the question of religion. Although at the political level we have anti-clerical positions, we think that at the social level one should not insist on this issue, preventing members of the exploited classes that have religious beliefs from struggling. Many people in the exploited classes hold religious beliefs and it is possible to work with this question within the movements, without impeding these people from struggling. There are many progressive religious groups in the social movements, which are part of the broad camp of the left and with which there is a possibility to work. Social movements "must seek a common basis, a series of simple principles on which all workers, whatever may be [their political and religious choices], being at least serious workers, that is, severely exploited and suffered men, are and must be in agreement"[6].

Another important characteristic of social movements is autonomy, which occurs primarily in relation to the state, political parties, bureaucratic unions, the church, among others. Social movements have to make decisions and act on their own, dealing with their own affairs independent of organisms that exercise, or seek to exercise, domination over them. Therefore, those who want to lead, to order or to cause such that the social movements serve their own goals should not have influence over them, since they do not struggle for the collective good of the movements, but use the maxim that serving yourself is the best way to serve others.

Social movements should not be linked to politicians or to any sector of the state because we know that when they come wanting to help, in the vast majority of cases they are looking for a "base" for their party-political interests, or seeking to calm movements, establishing their

[5] Mikhail Bakunin. "Unity and Programme of the Revolutionary Forces …".In: Conceito de Liberdade, p. 163.

[6] Idem. "La Política de la Internacional" In: Frank Mintz (ed.). Bakunin: crítica y acción, P. 85. Despite being a fierce critic of clerical issues, Bakunin argued that even religious workers should join the labour movement. We think, like him, that religion should not divide social movements. On Bakunin's critique of God and religion see: Mikhail Bakunin. God and the State. Sao Paulo: Imaginário, 2000, and Mikhail Bakunin. Federalism, Socialism and Anti-theologism.

dialogues with institutions of the state. Knowing well the authoritarian conception of parties we know that their interest is always to harness social movements, be they reformist or revolutionary parties. Firstly, they participate in elections and see social movements as a source of votes. Secondly, they seek a "mass movement" that serves as a base for the vanguard that they wish to be. In this case, political parties want to lead and direct the social movements, thinking themselves superior to them and judging [themselves] to be the enlightened that will bring consciousness to the exploited classes. Often their members are intellectuals that want to know, better than the people themselves, what is best for them. Other organisations that seek to control, such as churches and bureaucratic unions also do not help social movements.

> All these people should be removed from social movements because they do not defend the interests of the social movements, but their own interests. The social movement does not need bosses, leaders or people who want to use it. The social movement needs people who want to support it and struggle with it, but not struggle for it, in its place. It is a place that is legitimised by the need for survival and by the dignity that causes that promote true solidarity possess.[7]

What social movements need is people that want to support them, regardless of their class origins, because they consider their struggle just. There is no problem with people that support social movements not being in exactly the same conditions as the other militants. Thus, we consider it just that employed people support the struggle of unemployed workers, that people who have housing support the struggle of the homeless, and so on. Even people who come from the middle classes can and even should, if they are ethical people, approximate themselves to the most exploited sectors of the people and offer their support. This solidarity should always be well-received, since it is important for the social movements. An ethical duty, as Kropotkin put it, to incite the members of the middle classes to struggle alongside the people. He said:

> [...] All you that possess knowledge, talents, if you have heart, come, you and your companions, put them at the service of those most in need. And know that if you were to come, not as masters, but as comrades in struggle; not in order to govern, but to inspire yourselves in a new midst; less to teach than to conceive the aspirations of the masses, guessing and formulating them, and then working, tirelessly, continually, [...] to make them come into life – know that then, and only then, will you have lived a complete life.[8]

This candidature of support for social movements should be subject to the attitudes of those who intend to act in this situation. Both the supporters, as well as the militants that are organisationally legitimate must demonstrate that they are much more willing to listen than to speak. They must become aware of the situation and of the circumstances of those that form the social movements and struggle shoulder-to-shoulder, to grow with them and not to define in an authoritarian and vertical manner their ways and forms. In this case, the supporter or militant will see that the most relevant thing will be to contrast their ideology with the reality of the group and not to try to reduce the social movement to their ideological certainties.

[7] Universidade Popular. Capitalismo, Anticapitalism e Organização Popular. Rio de Janeiro: UP / MTD-RJ (in press).

[8] Peter Kropotkin. "Aos Jovens" In: Palavras de um Revoltado, p. 67.

Furthermore, when we talk of autonomy we must keep in mind that autonomy, for us, does not mean the absence of ideological struggle or even a lack of organisation. When you encourage "non-ideology", frequent spontaneity; when you renounce the project and the revolutionary programme – often calling this autonomy – you open spaces and leave open terrain for the ruling class, the bureaucrats and the authoritarians that will occupy these spaces.

Another important feature of social movements is their combativeness. By claiming that they must be combative we wish to say that social movements must establish their conquests by imposing their social force, and not depend on favours or good deeds from any sectors of society, including the state. Combativeness is also characterised by a posture of defence of class struggle outside the state. As we understand the state as a strong supporting pillar for capitalism, we do not believe that social movements are able to exercise their politics inside it without this signifying a way of legitimising capitalism. The approaches that states take towards social movements are always a way to co-opt them, to make a certain "social pact" aimed at calming the spirits of the class struggle with the objective of ensuring the legitimacy of the system. Independent of whether social movements are more or less violent, the fact is that they should always remain combative, confronting capitalism and the state itself.

We also support direct action as a form of political action as opposed to representative democracy. Social movements should not seek to trust in politicians who operate within the state to represent their interests. We know that the machinery of the representative system transforms all who enter it, not allowing – even with the well-intentioned – that elected politicians perform actions on behalf of the exploited classes. Even the "left" politicians confuse means with ends and they confuse, more than clarify, social movements; not being, therefore, the most correct means for their emancipation. Direct action happens when the social movement itself,

> in constant reaction against the current environment expects nothing of men, of powers or of forces external to it, but [...] creates its own conditions of struggle and draws from itself its means of action. [...] Therefore, direct action is the clear and pure concretisation of the spirit of revolt: it materialises the class struggle, which it causes to pass from the field of theory and abstraction to the field of practice and realisation. As a result, direct action is the class struggle lived in the day-to-day, it is the permanent assault against capitalism.[9]

In this way social movements do not entrust their action to politicians but perform it on their own accord, putting into practice the motto of the IWA that "the emancipation of the workers will be the task of the workers themselves." The struggle for this emancipation must be done strategically, making direct action more or less violent conforming to the demands of circumstance. When it needs to be violent it must always be understood as a response, as self-defence in relation to the system of domination and exploitation in which we live.

Direct action is a way of social movements doing politics as

> we affirm that politics, in the sense that we advocate it, does not have a partisan meaning but the sense of management of what is public, for everyone. Politics that is made by the people, properly organised, effectively deciding on everything that concerns them. The politics we advocate is that which stands today as a struggle of

[9] Emile Pouget. L'Action Directe.

> the workers, organised from the bottom up, against the exploitation and oppression of which we are victims. It is in social mobilisation that we see some prospect of significant political change in society.[10]

In this case, social movements do not fight in order to have power in the state or in their institutional structures of power. They are always organised outside the state, advocating the return of political power to the people. Thus, we believe that the problem is not who occupies the state, but the state itself.

And it is only in this way that we understand the concept of popular [people's] power advocated by other groups and organisations. If by popular power we understand the growing social force of the organisations of the exploited classes, which are embedded in an ongoing dispute with capitalism and the state, then we agree. However, there are those who defend popular power as the support of vanguards detached from the base, hierarchy, authoritarian parties, claims to the state and bureaucracies of various kinds. When popular power signifies this second model, then we are in complete disagreement.

In addition to direct action as a way of doing politics, social movements – in the way in which we understand them – have a necessity, in the event that they propose themselves as agents of significant social transformation, to use direct democracy as a method of decision-making. Direct democracy takes place in social movements when all those who are involved in them participate effectively in the process of decision-making. By using this method decisions are made in an egalitarian way (all have the same voice and the same voting power) in horizontal assemblies, where the issues are discussed and deliberated. There are not people or groups that discuss and deliberate the issues outside of the assemblies; there is no hierarchy or bosses who order and others who obey.

Direct democracy exercised in this way can be compared to the functioning of libertarian socialism as explained earlier. In other words, social movements are co-ordinated internally by the principles of self-management and are joined, in cases of necessity, through federalism. It is important to note that, acting in this way, we are incorporating into our means of struggle positions held for the purposes we want to achieve, confirming the maxim that "the ends are in the means." Even the leaders and assumed functions are temporary, rotating and recallable.

In this model of social movement there is a necessity for militant conduct with ethics and responsibility. Ethics, which guides correct militant conduct, is grounded on principles that are opposed to capitalism and the state and which supports co-operation, solidarity and mutual aid. It also guides militant behaviour which operates without harming others, which encourages support, not allowing postures aimed at division or unfair infighting. Responsibility, a principle that opposes the values of capitalism, encourages the militant of the social movements to have initiative, that they assume responsibilities and fulfil them – this will prevent that a few are overloaded with many tasks – that they have attitudes consistent with the fighting spirit and that they contribute in the best way to the social movements.

Solidarity and mutual aid are also principles that should be encouraged in social movements. In opposition to the individualism of capitalism the unity of the exploited classes, in order to combat capitalism and the state, should be encouraged. On leaving isolation and seeking to associate oneself, to join with other people who want to build a more just and egalitarian world,

[10] FARJ. "A Política não é para os Políticos" In: Libera 136. Rio de Janeiro, 2006.

people build class solidarity. This occurs through the association of one person with another to form a social movement, or even of one social movement to another in pursuit of building the popular organisation and the overcoming of capitalism and the state. In this case the limits of the state should not be recognised as social movements should show solidarity by class interests, not national interests. When they are guided by the interests of class, social movements are internationalist.

Also, social movements constitute a preferred space for the development of culture and popular education. It is culture, as a way of being and living of the exploited classes, which will give body to popular education. All who are mobilised develop their learning and new forms, manifestations, languages and experiences translate the spirit of struggle. As there is no complete knowledge it is the process of exchange between the militants which allows for this education, in which there is no teacher and student; all are teachers and students. Everyone learns and everyone teaches. In this way occurs the construction of an education that respects people's culture and empowers militants through dialogues, debates, exchanges of experiences. In this process it is possible to compare the values of capitalism that are transmitted every day by the media, schools and other means of reproduction.

Moreover, the very "revolutionary gymnasium" provided by the experiences of struggle, at the same time as it will bring short-term gains will be responsible for assisting in this educational process, contributing with the practical experiences of seeking freedom through freedom itself.

The short-term gains, so-called reforms, when conquered by social movements will serve as ways to lessen the suffering of those who struggle and at the same time will teach the lessons of organisation and struggle. We understand, therefore, that "we will take or conquer eventual reforms in the same spirit as that which starts to take from the enemy bit-by-bit the ground he occupies, to advance ever more"[11]. And we believe that in struggling for reforms, social movements do not become reformists – those who understand the reforms as an end. Even with the struggle for reforms they can sustain a revolutionary practice and be against reformism, since "if we are against reformism, it is not because partial improvements do not interest us, but because we believe that reformism is not only an obstacle to the revolution, but even to the reforms "[12].

This statement leaves room for another key feature that we believe fundamental in social movements: revolutionary long-term perspective. In this case the idea is that social movements, besides having their specific banners (land, housing, work, etc.) may have as objectives the revolution and the construction of a new society. We understand the struggles of the short- and medium-term are complementary to this long-term perspective and not exclusive. With a long-term perspective movements have a greater ability for conquest, seeing as though the more distant the objectives, the greater the conquests – the first conquests not being the end of the struggle. Many social movements that do not have a long-term perspective, on having their demands met (land for the landless, homes for the homeless, work for the unemployed etc..) think that this is the end of the line. For us this is only the first step, and even if achieved, should stimulate other struggles and mobilisations around other problems that affect our society. It is this perspective that also provides a critical view of social movements in relation to capitalism and the state, leaving them alert to attempts at class conciliation and co-optation. This perspective also encourages solidarity and mutual aid, as the exploited classes no longer see themselves as fragmented, but

[11] Errico Malatesta. "Anarquismo e Reforma" In: Anarquistas, Socialistas e Comunistas, P. 146.
[12] Idem. "Quanto Pior Estiver, Melhor Será" In: Anarquistas, Socialistas e Comunistas, P. 67.

as part of a whole that struggles for a new society. Thus, social movements defend a long-term perspective that is revolutionary,

> in the sense that it wants to replace a society founded on inequality, on the exploitation of the vast majority of men by an oppressive minority, on privilege, on idleness, and on an authority protective of all these beautiful things with a society founded on equal justice for all and the freedom of all. [...] It wants, in short, an economic, political and social organisation in which every human being, without prejudice to their natural and individual peculiarities, finds equal opportunity to develop themselves, to educate themselves, to think, to work, to act and to enjoy life as a man.[13]

Another important point which must be mentioned is the fact that social movements have often been the result of spontaneous actions and mobilisations of the exploited classes. This fact is natural for us and we understand that we will always have to live with it. In extreme situations sectors of the population will revolt or be mobilised for different reasons: to denounce an injustice, to respond to an attack from the system, to get something to eat, a place to live etc. If on the one hand we advocate organisation we believe, on the other, that we should always support these moments of spontaneous popular mobilisation. Organisational objectives must be pursued in the midst of struggle. We must not, therefore, question spontaneity when it so happens, but rather, involved in the struggles, try to catalyse the forces in order to reach the necessary degree of organisation. The interaction of this dynamic of social movements, which naturally contains a high degree of spontaneity, with varying social contexts (repression, legislation, changes in the political forces at work etc.) will naturally cause social movements to have ebbs and flows. There will be times when the circumstances provide a reality of more radicalised and permanent struggle. In others they will provide contexts difficult for articulation, discouragement, fear, etc. That is, it is natural that there are contexts of ebbs and flows.

> At certain times, which are generally the precursors of great historical events, of the great triumphs of humanity, everything seems to advance at an accelerated pace, everything breathes strength: minds, hearts, will, everything goes in unison, everything seems to go to the conquest of new horizons. So it is established throughout society, like an electric current that unites the most distant individuals in the same sentiment and the most disparate minds in a common thought that imprints the same will on all. [...] But there are other gloomy times, desperate and fatal, where everything breathes decadence, prostration and death, and which manifest a true eclipse of the public and private conscience. It is the ebbs that always follow the major historical catastrophes.[14]

We consider it our duty to properly evaluate the context and act in the appropriate manner. In times when the context points to a flux we must attack, acting with full force and providing all the necessary organisation. In times when the context points to an ebb we must know how to live with the problems, "keeping the flame alight", and wait for the right time to re-mobilise.

Finally, our view is that we must break the isolation of individuals, creating and encouraging the development of social movements with the characteristics here stated. This is a first step in our

[13] Mikhail Bakunin. A Dupla Greve de Genebra, pp. 92-93.

[14] Idem. "Algumas Condições da Revolução." In: Conceito de Liberdade, pp.128-129.

permanent strategy. After this, in a second step, we understand as necessary the joining of various social movements for the constitution of what we call throughout text the popular organisation, this being the confluence of social movements in a constant struggle against capitalism and the state.

Seeking to permanently increase the radicalisation and social force of the popular organisation, we understand it to be possible to reach the social revolution and thus constitute libertarian socialism. In this process of social transformation we believe that the exploited classes have an indispensable role, "this mass, [...] without the strong help of which the triumph of the revolution will never be possible"[15].

[15] Idem. "Educação Militante". In: Conceito de Liberdade, p. 147.

The Specific Anarchist Organisation: The Anarchist Organisation

> If [the revolutionary] lacks the guiding idea of their action, they will not be anything other than a ship without a compass.
>
> **Ricardo Flores Magón**

> An anarchist organisation must be based, in my opinion, on full autonomy, on full independence, and, therefore, on the full responsibility of individuals and groups; free agreement between those who believe it to be useful to unite in order to co-operate with a common end; a moral duty to keep to the commitments accepted and not to do anything that contradicts the accepted programme.
>
> **Errico Malatesta**

In this text we have sometimes discussed the specific anarchist organisation and our expectations in relation to it. As we have earlier defined, its objective is "to build the popular organisation and influence it, giving it the desired character, and to reach libertarian socialism by means of the social revolution". Further, we understand this as the political level of activity.

The specific anarchist organisation is the grouping of anarchist individuals who, through their own will and free agreement, work together with well-defined objectives. For this it uses forms and means in order that these objectives are achieved, or that, at least, it proceeds towards them. Thus, we can consider the anarchist organisation as "[...] the set of individuals who have a common objective and strive to achieve it; it is natural that they understand each other, join their forces, share the work and take all measures suitable for this task "[1]. Through the anarchist organisation anarchists articulate themselves at the political and ideological level, in order to put into practice revolutionary politics and to devise the means – the way of working – that should point to the final objectives: social revolution and libertarian socialism. This political practice, which seeks the final objectives, should be carried out

> creating an organisation that can fulfil the tasks of anarchism, not only in times of preparing the social revolution, but also afterwards. Such an organisation must unite all the revolutionary forces of anarchism and immediately concern itself with the preparation of the masses for the social revolution and with the struggle for the realisation of the anarchist society.[2]

This organisation is founded on fraternal agreements, both for its internal functioning as for its external action – without having relations of domination, exploitation or alienation in its midst –

[1] Errico Malatesta. "Organisation II." In: Escritos Revolucionários, p. 55.

[2] Nestor Makhno. "Our Organisation". In: Anarchy and Organisation. St. Paul, Libertarian Struggle, s / d, p. 31.

which constitute a libertarian organisation. The function of the specific anarchist organisation is to co-ordinate, converge and permanently increase the social force of anarchist militant activities, providing a tool for solid and consistent struggle, which is a fundamental means for the pursuit of the final objectives. Therefore,

> [...] it is necessary to unite and to organise: first to discuss, then to gather the means for the revolution, and finally, to form an organic whole that, armed with its means and strengthened by its union can, when the historical moment is sounded, sweep all the aberrations and all the tyrannies of the world away [...]. The organisation is a means to differentiate yourself, of detailing a programme of ideas and established methods, a type of uniting banner to embark in combat knowing those with whom you can count and having become aware of the force at one's disposal.[3]

To constitute this tool of solid and consistent combat, it is essential that the anarchist organisation has well-determined strategic-tactical and political lines – which occur through theoretical and ideological unity, and the unity of strategy and tactics. This organisation of well-defined lines joins the anarchists at the political and ideological level, and develops their political practice at the social level – which characterises an organisation of active minority, seeing as though the social level is always much larger than the political level. This political practice takes shape when the anarchist organisation of active minority performs social work in the midst of the class struggle, seeking social insertion which takes shape from the moment that the anarchist organisation manages to influence the social movements with which it works. Properly organised as an active minority, the anarchists constitute a much larger social force in the realisation of social work and have a greater chance of having social insertion. Besides social work and insertion, the specific anarchist organisation performs other activities: the production and reproduction of theory, anarchist propaganda, political education, conception and implementation of strategy, political and social relations and resource management. So we can say that the activities of the specific anarchist organisation are:

- Social Work and Insertion
- Production and Reproduction of Theory
- Anarchist Propaganda
- Political Education
- Conception and Implementation of Strategy
- Social and Political Relations

Resource Management

These activities can be performed in a more or less public way, always taking into account the social context in which it [the organisation] operates. We say more or less public because we believe that "one should do publicly what it is agreed that everyone should know, and secretly that which it is agreed should be hidden"[4]. In times of less repression the anarchist organisation operates publicly, performing the greatest propaganda possible and trying to attract the largest number of people. In times of increased repression, if, "for example, a government forbids us to

[3] Luigi Fabbri. "A Organização Anarquista". In: Anarco-Communismo Italiano, pp. 107, 110-111.

[4] Errico Malatesta. "La Propaganda Anarquista." Excerpted from Pensiero e Voluntà, January 19, 1925. In: Vernon Richards. Op. p. 171.

speak, to print, to meet, to associate, and we do not have the strength to rebel openly, we would try to speak, to print, to meet and to associate clandestinely "[5].

In this work, which varies according to the social context, the specific anarchist organisation must always defend the interests of the exploited classes, because we understand it as a political expression of these interests. For us, the ideas of anarchism

> [...] are nothing if not the purest and most faithful expression of popular instincts. If they do not correspond with these instincts they are false; and, to the extent that they are false, will be rejected by the people. But if these ideas are an honest expression of the instincts, if they represent the true thought of the people, they will quickly penetrate the spirit of the revolting multitudes; and as long as these ideas encounter the way of the popular spirit, will advance quickly to their full realisation.[6]

The specific anarchist organisation, understood as a political expression of the interests of the exploited classes, does not act on their behalf and never places itself above them. It does not replace the organisation of the exploited classes, but gives anarchists the chance to put themselves at their service.

In this political practice of placing itself at the service of the exploited classes the anarchist organisation is guided by a Charter of Principles. The principles are the ethical propositions and notions, both non-negotiable, that guide all political practice, providing models for anarchist action. "The assumption of consistency with these principles is what determines ideological authenticity pertaining to anarchism."[7] In our case, the Charter of Principles of 2003[8] defines nine principles: freedom, ethics and values, federalism, self-management, internationalism, direct action, class struggle, political practice and social insertion, and mutual aid.

In first place we assert the principle of *freedom*, affirming that "the struggle for freedom precedes anarchy." Like Bakunin thought, we hold that "individual freedom [...] can only find its ultimate expression in collective freedom", and we reject, therefore, the individualist proposals of anarchism. The pursuit of libertarian socialism is thus the incessant struggle for freedom. Another principle absolutely central for us is that of *ethics* and *values* which causes us to base all of our practice on the anarchist ethic, which is a "non-negotiable militant commitment." Through ethics, among other things, we advocate the consistency between means and ends and mutual respect.

We assert *federalism* and *self-management* as principles of non-hierarchical and decentralised organisation, sustained by mutual aid and free association, assuming the premise of the IWA that everyone has rights and duties. Beyond this, it is these principles that will guide the management of the future society at all levels: economic, political and social management, performed by the workers themselves. Emphasising the need for struggles to be self-managed we affirm that "even if living with the current outdated system, [self-management] gives potential to the transformations that point towards an egalitarian society."

By asserting *internationalism* we highlight the international character of struggles and the need for us to associate ourselves by class affinities and not those of nationality. The exploited of

[5] Ibid. p. 172.

[6] Mikhail Bakunin. "Mobilização do Proletariado." In: Conceito de Liberdade, p. 134.

[7] FARJ. "Carta de Princípios."

[8] Ibid. The quotation marks in the next seven paragraphs refer to this document.

one country must see in the exploited of another a companion of the struggle, and not an enemy. Internationalism is opposed to nationalism and the exaltation of the state, as they represent a sense of superiority over other countries and peoples, and reinforce ethnocentrism and prejudice – the first steps towards xenophobia. Everyone, regardless of their nationality, is equal and should be free.

Direct action is posited as a principle founded on horizontalism and encourages the protagonism of workers, opposing representative democracy which, as we have already stated, alienates politically. Direct action puts the people in front of their own decisions and actions, "linking workers and the oppressed to the centre of political action."

In addition, we choose to base ourselves on *class struggle*, defining ourselves as a workers organisation of workers that defend the exploited, and fight for the extinction of class society and for the creation of a society in which slaves and masters no longer exist. Therefore, we recognise and give precedence to the class struggle. For us, there is a central need to combat the evils of capitalism head on, and for this it is essential to fight alongside the exploited, where the consequences of class society become more clear and evident.

The principle of *political practice* and *social insertion* reinforces the idea that it is only with the exploited classes that anarchism is able to flourish. Therefore, the anarchist organisation should seek to relate to all forms of popular struggle, regardless of where they may be taking place. We affirm that the interaction of the anarchist organisation with any manifestation "in the social, cultural, peasant, trade union, student, community, environmental camps etc., as long as inserted into the context of struggles for freedom," contemplates the concretisation of this principle.

As the last principle in the Charter *mutual aid* encourages solidarity in struggle, encouraging the maintenance of fraternal relations with all who truly work for a just and egalitarian world. It encourages effective solidarity among the exploited.

At the moment in which it performs social work the specific anarchist organisation seeks to influence the social movements in a constructive way, with proposals and, at the same time, keep away from them the negative influence of individuals and groups who – instead of defending the interests of the people, encouraging them to be the protagonists of their own emancipation – use them to achieve other objectives. We know that politicians, parties, unions and also other authoritarian organisations and individuals – like the church, drug trafficking etc. – constitute obstacles to the construction of the popular organisation since they penetrate social movements, in the vast majority of cases, seeking to take advantage of the number of people present there to: find support in elections, constitute the base for authoritarian power projects, get money, conquer faiths, open new markets and so on. Authoritarian organisations and individuals do not want to support social movements, but use them to achieve their (the authoritarian organisations' and individuals') own objectives, which are not consistent with the objectives of the militants of the social movements – that is, the authoritarians seek to establish a relationship of domination over the social movements.

Any anarchist who has organised or even seen how working in social movements works knows that, if there is not a consistent organisation, capable of giving the necessary strength to the anarchists in the ongoing dispute over political space, the authoritarians become hegemonic and the work of the anarchists is completely lost. The anarchists, by not constituting the necessary social force, offer two possibilities: either they will be used by the authoritarians as workhorses (aka "sleeves") in carrying out their authoritarian power projects, or they will simply be removed. In the first case we speak of anarchists that are not specifically organised and go in the wake of

events. When they are not organised, they do not exert the necessary influence to have even a little social force. While they do not interfere much they are allowed in the social movements. In the second case we speak of isolated anarchists who begin to exert some influence, or, in authoritarian understanding, they begin to interfere. In this case they are expelled, removed or vilified. They are literally "bowled over" by the authoritarians. Without the necessary organisation they cannot maintain themselves in the social movements and much less exert the desired influence.

This happens because when there is not a proper organisation of anarchists, it is possible to establish authoritarian, or less libertarian organisations. In addressing the permanent dispute over political space we are not saying that anarchists should fight for the leadership, supervision, or any position of privilege in the social movements. We talk, on the contrary, of the internal struggle that takes place when we want to influence social movements to use libertarian practices.

We believe that there is never a political vacuum, anywhere. Therefore, from the moment we cause our positions to prevail it necessarily means a decrease in the influence of the authoritarians and vice versa. For example, on seeing that some anarchists are struggling for a movement to use direct action and direct democracy, politicians and party devices will be against it, and unless there is a strong organisation of anarchists, with social insertion and the ability to fight for these positions, the authoritarian positions will have greater chances to prosper. When we are properly organised as anarchists we will not lag behind events, but manage to mark our positions and exert our influence in the social movements, going on to have true insertion. It is through the specific anarchist organisation that we can manage to be properly organised for the work we want to perform in the most varying social movements.

> The anarchist organisation should be the continuation of our efforts and our propaganda; it must be the libertarian adviser that guides us in our everyday combat action. We can base ourselves on its programme to spread our action in other camps, in all the special organisations of particular struggles into which we can penetrate and take our activity and action: for example, in the trade unions, in anti-militarist societies, in anti-religious and anti-clerical groupings etc. Our special organisation can serve equally as a ground for anarchist concentration (not centralised!), as a field of agreement, of understanding and of the most complete solidarity as possible between us. The more we are united, the smaller will be the danger that we be dragged into incoherence, or that we turn from our impetus for struggle to battles and skirmishes where others who are not at all in agreement with us could tie our hands.[9]

Thus, the anarchist organisation, besides being responsible for its political practice in different camps serves to increase the social force of the anarchists within them. Among the various forces present in these spaces anarchists should stand out and bring to fruition their positions.

This political practice in different camps requires that the anarchist organisation divides itself into fronts, which are the internal groups that carry out social work. Generally, organisations that work with this methodology suggests that three basic fronts are developed: trade union, community and student. Differently, we believe that the fronts should be divided, not according to these pre-stipulated spaces of insertion, but based on the practical work of the organisation.

[9] Luigi Fabbri. "A Organização Anarquista". In: Anarco-Communismo Italiano, p. 116.

In our understanding there should not be an obligation to develop work in these three fronts and, in addition, there may be other interesting spaces that demand dedicated fronts.

Each organisation should seek spaces more conducive to the development of its social work, and from this practical necessity form its fronts. Thus, if there is work in the student sector, there may be a student front. If there is union work, there may be a trade union front. However, if other work is developed, for example, with rural movements or with urban movements etc., the fronts should follow this division. That is, instead of having only one community front that works with rural and urban social movements, you could create a front of rural movements and another front of urban movements. In this sense, we support a model of dynamic fronts that account for the internal division of the specific anarchist organisation for the practical realisation of social work in the best way possible.

The fronts are responsible, in their respective area of work, for the creation and development of social movements as well as for ensuring that anarchists occupy political space – space that is in permanent dispute – and to exercise due influence in these movements.

In the case of our organisation we initiated social work divided into two fronts. The "community front," which combines the work of management of the Fabio Luz Social Library (Biblioteca Social Fábio Luz - BSFL), of the Centre of Social Culture of Rio de Janeiro (Centro de Cultura Social - CCS-RJ) and its community work, the Marques da Costa Centre for Research (Núcleo de Pesquisa Marques da Costa - NPMC) and of the Ideal Peres Libertarian Study Circle (Círculo de Estudos Libertários Ideal Peres - CELIP). The other was the "occupations front", which was involved with urban occupations and the Internationalist Front of the Homeless (Frente Internacionalista dos Sem-Teto - FIST). With the change in the situation we left FIST, continuing to work with occupations and have gone on to bring together a few occupiers, and many other unemployed in the Movement of Unemployed Workers (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Desempregados - MTD). This movement took on great importance in this front. In this way the "occupations front" was renamed "urban social movements front." Likewise, because we deemed it necessary, we constituted a third front: the "agro-ecological front" (Anarchism and Nature) from practical work in rural social movements, of ecology and agriculture, which began to be developed by the organisation. In this way, we hold that the fronts are adapted to the practical context of work. We illustrate how this works in practice.

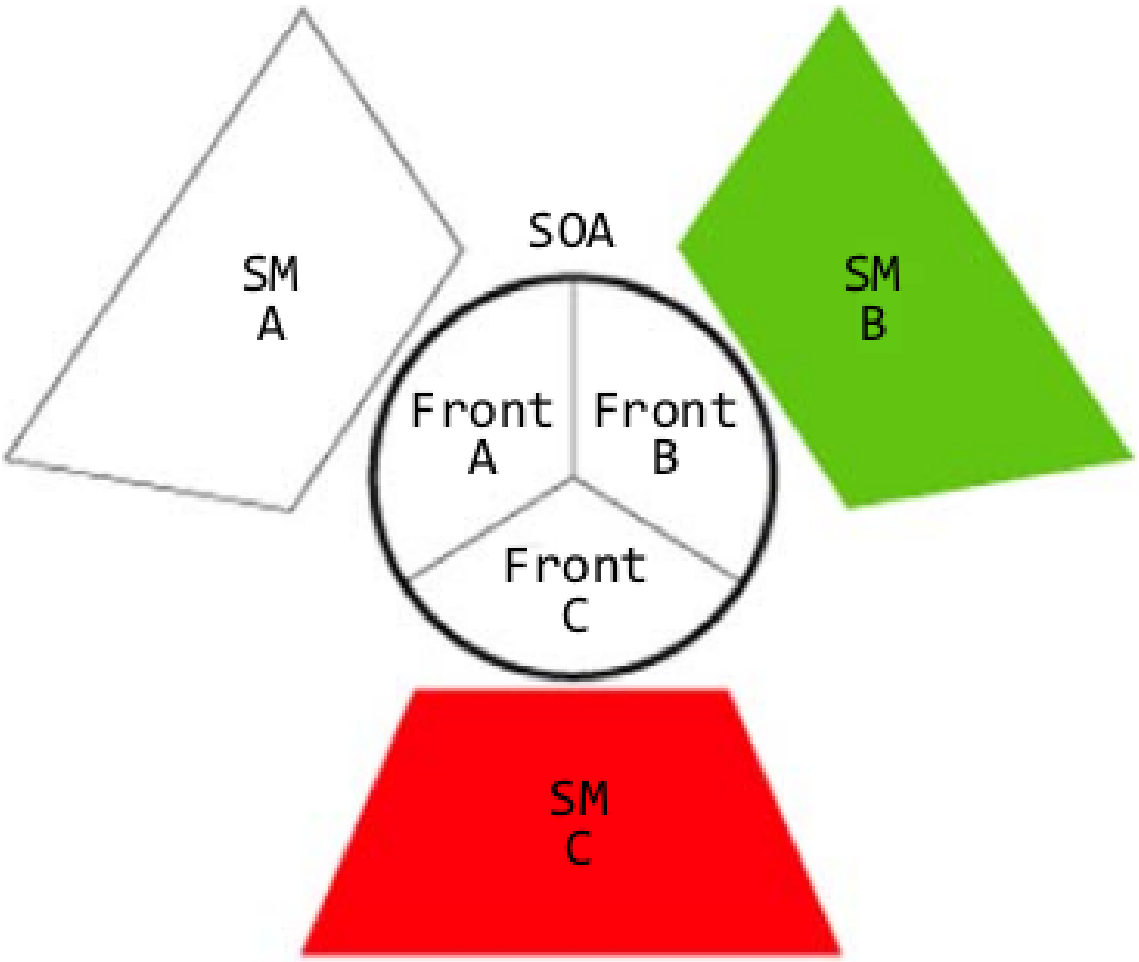

Diagram 1

Diagram 1

SAO being the specific anarchist organisation (divided into fronts A, B and C) and SM the social movements, the SAO is divided internally into the fronts which act, each one, in a determined SM or SM sector. In this case, assuming that the SAO works with three SM, or with three SM sectors, it divides itself for the work in three fronts. Front A works with SMA or with sector A of a determined SM. Front B works with SMB or with sector B of a determined SM, and so on. Giving practical examples: the SAO can be divided into a syndicalist front (A), a community front (B) and a student front (C), and each one of them will act in a SM. Front A will act in the union, front B in the community and C in the student movement. In our case, our SAO is today divided into three fronts: urban social movements (A), community (B) and agro-ecology (Anarchism and Nature) (C). Each of these works in one or more social movements. Front A in the homeless movement and in the MTD, front B in the community movement and front C in the rural movements of ecology and agriculture.

Besides this internal division into fronts, which functions for social work, the specific anarchist organisations uses, both for its internal and external functioning, the logic of what we call "concentric circles" – strongly inspired by the Bakuninist organisational model. The main reason that we adopt this logic of functioning is because, for us, the anarchist organisation needs to preserve different instances of action. These different instances should strengthen its work while at the same time allowing it to bring together prepared militants with a high level of commitment and approximating people sympathetic to the theory or practice of the organisation – who could be more or less prepared and more or less committed. In short, the concentric circles seek to resolve an important paradox: the anarchist organisation needs to be closed enough to have prepared, committed and politically aligned militants, and open enough to draw in new militants.

A large part of the problems that occur in anarchist organisations are caused by them not functioning according to the logic of concentric circles and by not implementing these two instances of action. Should a person who says they are an anarchist and is interested in the work of the organisation be in the organisation, despite not knowing the political line in depth? Should a laymen interested in anarchist ideas be in the organisation? How do you relate to "libertarians" – in the broadest sense of the term – who do not consider themselves anarchists? Should they be in the organisation? And the older members who have already done important work but now want to be close, but not to engage in the permanent activities of the organisation? And those that can only rarely dedicate time for activism? There are many questions. Other problems occur because there are doubts about the implementation of social work. Must the organisation present itself as an anarchist organisation in the social movements? In its social work can it form alliances with other individuals, groups and organisations that are not anarchist? In such a case, what are the common points to advocate? How do you carry out social work in a field with people from different ideologies and maintain an anarchist identity? How do you ensure that anarchism does not lose its identity when in contact with social movements? On this point there are also many questions.

The concentric circles are intended to provide a clear place for each of the militants and sympathisers of the organisation. In addition, they seek to facilitate and strengthen the social work of the anarchist organisation, and finally, establish a channel for the capture of new militants.

In practice the logic of concentric circles is established as follows. Inside the specific anarchist organisation there are only anarchists that, to a greater or lesser extent, are able to elaborate,

reproduce and apply the political line of the organisation internally, in the fronts and in public activity. Also, to a greater or lesser extent, militants should be able to assist in the elaboration of the strategic-tactical line of the organisation, as well as having full capacity to reproduce and apply it. Militants assume internal functions in the organisation – be they executive, deliberative or extraordinary – as well as external functions with regards to social work. The functions assumed by the militants within the organisation adhere to self-management and federalism, or to horizontal decisions where all the militants have the same power of voice and of vote and where, in specific cases, there is delegation with imperative mandates. The functions to be performed by the delegates must be very well defined so that they "cannot act on behalf of the association unless the members thereof have explicitly authorised them [to do so]; they should execute only what the members have decided and not dictate the way forward to the association"[10]. Moreover, the functions should be rotated in order to empower everyone and avoid crystallised positions or functions.

The specific anarchist organisation could have only one circle of militants, all of them being in the same instance, or it could have more than one circle – the criteria being collectively defined. For example, this may be the time that a person has been in the organisation or their ability to elaborate the political or tactical-strategic lines. Thus, the newer militants or those with a lesser ability to elaborate the lines may be in a more external (distant) circle, with the more experienced militants with a greater ability for elaborating the lines in another more internal (closer) one. There is not a hierarchy between the circles, but the idea is that the more "inside", or the closer the militant, the better are they able to formulate, understand, reproduce and apply the lines of the organisation. The more "inside" the militant, the greater is their level of commitment and activity. The more a militant offers the organisation, the more is demanded of them by it. It is the militants who decide on their level of commitment and they do or do not participate in the instances of deliberation based on this choice. Thus, the militants decide how much they want to commit and the more they commit, the more they will decide. The less they commit, the less they will decide.

This does not mean that the position of the more committed is of more value than that of the less committed. It means that they participate in different decision-making bodies. For example, those more committed participate with voice and vote in the Congresses, which define the political and strategic lines of the organisation; the less committed do not participate in the Congresses, or only participate as observers, and participate in the monthly assemblies where the tactics and practical applications of the lines are defined.

Thus, inside the specific anarchist organisation you may have one or more circles, which should always be defined by the level of commitment of the militants. In the case of more than one level this must be clear to everyone, and the criteria to change a level must be available to all militants. It is, therefore, the militant who chooses where they want to be.

The next circle, more external and distant from the core of the anarchist organisation, is no longer part of the organisation but has a fundamental importance: the level of supporters. This body, or instance, seeks to group together all people who have ideological affinities with the anarchist organisation. Supporters are responsible for assisting the organisation in its practical work, such as the publishing of pamphlets, periodicals or books; the dissemination of propaganda material; helping in the work of producing theory or of contextual analysis; in the organisation

[10] Ibid. p. 124.

of practical activities for social work: community activities, help in training work, logistical activities, help in organising work, etc. This instance of support is where people who have affinities with the anarchist organisation and its work have contact with other militants, are able to deepen their knowledge of the political line of the organisation, better get to know its activities and deepen their vision of anarchism, etc.

Therefore, the category of support has an important role to help the anarchist organisation put into practice its activities, seeking to bring those interested closer to it. This approximation has as a future objective that some of these supporters will become militants of the organisation. The specific anarchist organisation draws in the greatest possible number of supporters and, through practical work, identifies those interested in joining the organisation and who have an appropriate profile for membership. The proposal for entry into the organisation may be made by the militants of the organisation to the supporter and vice-versa. Although each militant chooses their level of commitment to the organisation and where they want to be, the objective of the anarchist organisation is always to have the greatest number of militants in the more internal circles, with a greater level of commitment.

Let us give a practical example: lets suppose that an organisation has deliberated to work internally with two levels of commitment – or two circles. When the militants are new they enter at the level of "militant" and, when they have been there six months and are prepared and committed militants, move on to the level of "full militant". Let us suppose that this organisation has also resolved to have a level of supporters. The objective of the organisation will be to draw in the greatest possible number of supporters, based on the affinity of each one with the organisation, transferring them to the level of militant and, after six months – once prepared – to the level of full militant. We illustrate how this can work in practice.

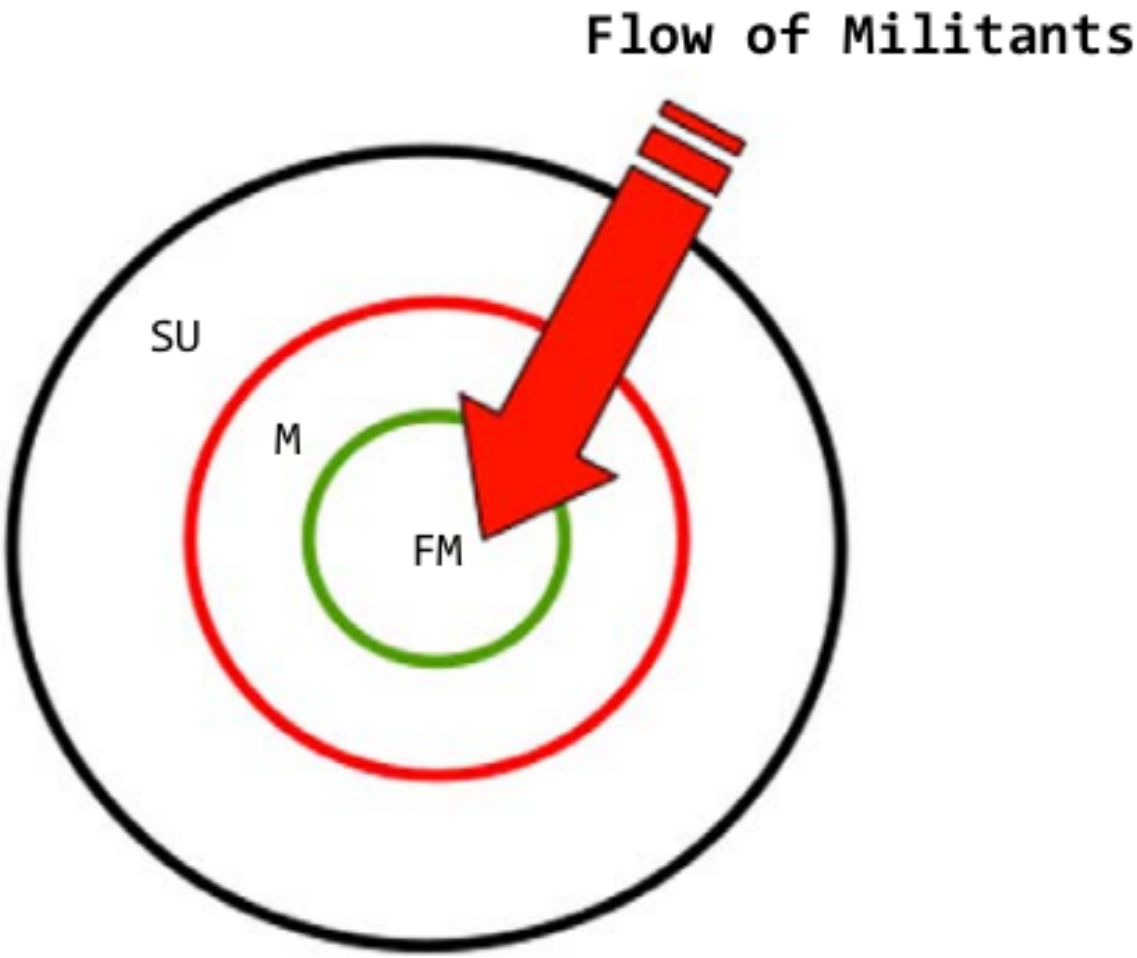

Diagram 2

Diagram 2

SU being the level of supporters, M of militants and FM of full militants, the objective is the flow indicated by the red arrow – to go from SU to M and from M to FM. Those who are interested can follow this flow, and those who are not can stay where they feel better. For example, if a person wants to give sporadic support, and no more than that, they may want to always stay at SU. The issue here is that all a person's will to work should be utilised by the organisation. This is not because a person has little time, or because they prefer to help at a time when it must be rejected, but because inside a specific anarchist organisation there must be room for all those who wish to contribute. "Accomplishments are the criteria for selection that never fail. The aptitude and efficiency of the militants are, fundamentally, measures for the enthusiasm and the application with which they perform their tasks".[11]

The logic of concentric circles requires that each militant and the organisation itself have very well defined rights and duties for each level of commitment. This is because it is not just for someone to make decisions about something with which they will not comply. A supporter who frequents activities once a month and makes sporadic contributions, for example, cannot decide on rules or activities that must be met or carried out daily, as they would be deciding something much more for the other militants than for themselves.

It is a very common practice in libertarian groups that people who make sporadic contributions decide on issues which end up being committed to or carried out by the more permanent members. It is very easy for a militant who appears from time to time to want to set the political line of the organisation, for example, since it is not they who will have to follow this line most of the time.

These are disproportionate forms of decision-making in which one ends up deciding something which others enact. In the model of concentric circles we seek a system of rights and duties in which everyone makes decisions about that which they could and should be committed to afterwards. In this way it is normal for supporters to decide only on that in which they will be involved. In the same way it is normal for militants of the organisation to decide on that which they will carry out. Thus we make decisions and their commitments proportionally and this implies that the organisation has clear criteria for entry, clearly defining who does and does not take part in it, and at what level of commitment the militants are.

An important criteria for entry is that all of the militants who enter the organisation must agree with its political line. For this the anarchist organisation must have theoretical material that expresses this line – in less depth for those who are not yet members of the organisation and in more depth for those who are. When someone is interested in the work of the anarchist organisation, showing interest in approximation, you should make this person a supporter and give them the necessary guidance. As a supporter, knowing the political line in a little more depth and having an affinity for the practical work of the organisation, the person may show interest in joining the organisation or the organisation can express its interest in the supporter becoming a militant. In both cases the supporter should receive permanent guidance from the anarchist organisation, giving to them theoretical material that will deepen their political line. One or more militants who know this line well will discuss doubts, debate and make clarifications with them. Having secured the agreement of the supporter with the political line of the organisation, and

[11] Juan Mechoso. Acción Directa Anarquista: una historia de FAU. Montevideo: Recortes, s / d, p. 199. The quotations marks of the Mechoso book refer to documents of the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation (FAU).

with agreement from both parties, the militant is integrated into the organisation. It is important that in the initial period every new militant has the guidance of another older one, who will orient and prepare them for work. In any event, the anarchist organisation always has to concern itself with the training and guidance of the supporters and militants so that this may allow them to change their level of commitment, if they so desire.

This same logic of concentric circles works in social work. Through it the anarchist organisation is articulated to perform social work in the most appropriate and effective way. As we have seen, the anarchist organisation is divided internally into fronts for the performance of practical work. For this there are organisations that prefer to establish direct relations with the social movements, and there are others that prefer to present themselves through an intermediary social organisation, which we could call a grouping of tendency.

> Participation in the grouping of tendency implies acceptance of a set of definitions that can be shared by comrades of diverse ideological origins, but which share certain indispensable exclusions (to the reformists, for example) if seeking a minimum level of real operational coherence. (…) The groupings of tendency, co-ordinated with each other and rooted in the most combative of the people (…) are a higher level than the latter [the level of the masses].[12]

The grouping of tendency puts itself between the social movements and the specific anarchist organisation, bringing together militants of distinct ideologies that have affinity in relation to certain practical questions.

As we have emphasised, there are anarchist organisations that prefer to present themselves directly in the social movements, without the need for the groupings of tendency, and others preferring to present themselves by means of these. In both cases there are positive and negative points and each organisation must determine the best way to act. As the views that we advocate in the social movements are much more practical than theoretical, it may be interesting to work with a grouping of tendency, incorporating people who agree with some or all of the positions that we advocate in the social movements (force, class struggle, autonomy, combativeness, direct action, direct democracy and revolutionary perspective) and that will help us to augment the social force in defence of these positions.

In the same way as in the diagram above, the idea is that the specific anarchist organisation seeks insertion in this intermediate level (grouping of tendency) and through it presents itself, conducting its work in social movements in search of social insertion. Again we illustrate how this works in practice.

[12] Ibid. pp. 190, 192.

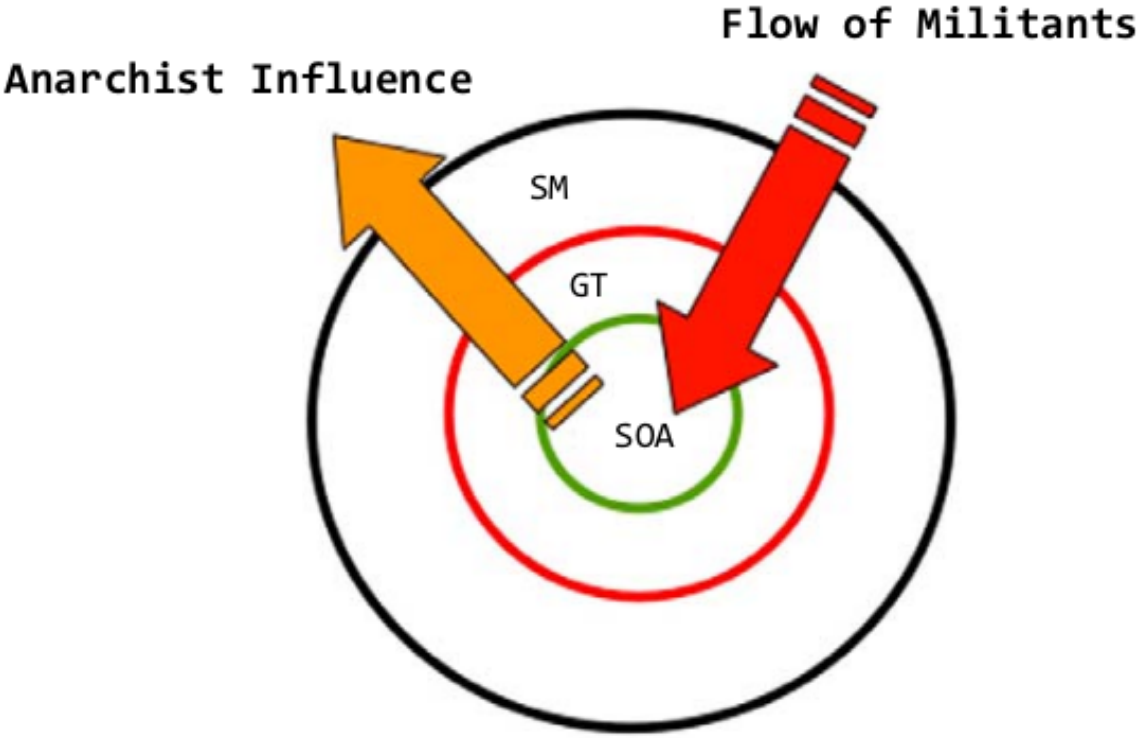

Diagram 3

Diagram 3

SAO being the specific anarchist organisation, GT the grouping of tendency and SM the social movement, there are two flows.

The first – that of the influence of the SAO – seeks to go through the GT and from there to the SM. Let us look at a few practical examples. The anarchist organisation that desires to act in a union may form a grouping of tendency with other activists from the union movement who defend some specific banners (revolutionary perspective, direct action, etc.) and by means of this tendency may influence the union movement, or the union in which it acts. Or the anarchist organisation may choose to work with the landless movement and, for this, brings people who defend similar positions (autonomy, direct democracy, etc.) in the social movement together in a grouping of tendency. By means of this grouping of tendency the specific anarchist organisation acts within the landless movement and, in this way, seeks to influence it.

This form of organisation aims to solve a very common problem that we find in activism. For example, when we know very dedicated activists; revolutionaries that advocate self-management, autonomy, grassroots democracy, direct democracy, etc. and with whom we do not act because they are not anarchists. These activists could work with the anarchists in the groupings of tendency and defend their positions in the social movements together.

The second arrow in the diagram shows the objective of the flow of militants. That is, in this scheme of work the goal is to bring people in the social movements that have practical affinity with the anarchists into the groupings of tendency and, from there, bring those that have ideological affinity closer to the anarchist organisation. In the same way as in the previous diagram, if a militant has great practical affinity with the anarchists, but is not an anarchist, they must be a member of the grouping of tendency and will be fundamental to the performance of social work. If they have ideological affinities they may be closer to or even join the organisation.

The objective of the anarchist organisation is not to turn all activists into anarchists, but to learn to work with each of these activists in the most appropriate way. While having mutual interests the militants may change their positions in the circles (from the social movement to the grouping of tendency or from the grouping of tendency to the anarchist organisation). Without these mutual interests, however, each one acts where they think it more pertinent.

The decision-making process used in the anarchist organisation is an attempt at consensus, using the vote when consensus is not possible. Unlike some libertarian groups and organisations we believe that consensus should not be mandatory. As we mentioned earlier, besides consensus being a very inefficient form of decision-making, becoming unfeasible the more the number of people involved in the decisions increases, it offers the serious problem of giving great power to isolated agents. In an organisation of 20 militants one could block consensus, or even if 19 were in favour of one position and one another, you would have to have a "middle ground" that would consider, in a very disproportionate way, the only dissenter. To give proper efficiency to the decision-making process and not to give too much power to isolated agents, we chose this model of an attempt at consensus, and when this is not possible, the vote. "If it were in the very bosom of the organisation that the disagreement arose, that the division between majority and minority appeared around minor issues, over practical modalities or over special cases [...], then it may occur more or less easily that the minority are inclined to do as the majority."[13] In the case of voting all the militants of the organisation, even those who are outvoted, have an obligation

[13] Luigi Fabbri. "A Organização Anarquista". In: Anarco-Communismo Italiano, p. 121.

to follow the winning position. This decision-making process is used to establish theoretical and ideological unity and also for strategic and tactical unity. We will return to these later. At this point it is enough to emphasise that for the struggle we want to pursue, we must put an end to dispersion and disorganisation and "the way to overcome this is to create an organisation that [... is based] on the basis of specific theoretical and tactical positions, and that leads us to a firm understanding of how these should be applied in practice"[14].

It is important to add, too, that the militants must use common sense at the time of decisions by vote. They should carefully observe the positions of militants who are closest to the issues that are being voted on, as these positions are more important than those who are not close, even though they have the same weight in voting. When voting occurs it can be easy for militants not involved in the issue being voted on to determine what others will have to do. Such situations demand caution and those in which all the members that would carry out what was deliberated on lose the vote, and are obliged to apply what was resolved by others, should be avoided.

Also in relation to decisions, at the time in which they are being taken "there must be a lot of space for all discussions and all points of view must be analysed carefully"[15]. After deliberation, "responsibilities [are divided], the members being formally responsible for their execution," since "the organisation does nothing by itself." Then "all the activities that are deliberated and which are the responsibility of the organisation will have, in one way or another, to be executed by its members" and, for this execution, there is the "need to divide the activities between militants, always looking for a model that distributes these activities well and to avoid the concentration of tasks on the more active or capable members". "From the moment in which a militant assumes one or more tasks for the organisation, he has an obligation to perform them and a great responsibility to the group [...]. It is the relationship of commitment that the militant assumes with the organisation."

Furthermore, we believe it to be relevant and reaffirm, once again, that "self-discipline is the engine of the self-managed organisation" and this also applies to the specific anarchist organisation. Thus, "each one that assumes a responsibility must have sufficient discipline to execute it. Likewise, when the organisation determines a line to follow or something to accomplish, it is individual discipline that will cause what is collectively resolved to be realised." We note:

> we also ask for discipline, because, without understanding, without co-ordinating the efforts of each one to a common and simultaneous action, victory is not physically possible. But discipline should not be a servile discipline, a blind devotion to leaders, an obedience to the one who always says not to interfere. Revolutionary discipline is consistent with the ideas accepted, fidelity to commitments assumed, it is to feel obliged to share the work and the risks with struggle comrades.[16]

"We believe that in order for our struggle to bear promising fruit it is fundamental that each of the militants of the organisation have a high degree of commitment, responsibility and self-discipline."[17] "It is will and militant commitment that will cause us to go, day after day, towards

[14] Dielo Trouda. "El Problem de la Organización y la Síntesis notional".

[15] FARJ. "Reflections on the commitment ...". The unidentified quotes in this and the next paragraph refers to this article.

[16] Errico Malatesta. "Action and Discipline." In: Anarchists, Socialists and Communists, P. 24.

[17] FARJ. "Reflections on the commitment ..."

the development of the organisation's activities such that we can overcome the obstacles and pave the way for our long-term objectives."[18] Finally, we should know that "responsibility and organisational discipline should not horrify: they are travel companions of the practice of social anarchism"[19].

This position introduces a relation of co-responsibility between the militants and the organisation, it being that the anarchist organisation "will be responsible for the revolutionary and political activity of each member, the same way as each member will be responsible for the revolutionary and political activity"[20] of the anarchist organisation.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Nestor Makhno. "On Revolutionary Discipline." In: Organisation and Anarchy, p. 34.

[20] Dielo Trouda. "Organisational Platform of the General Union of Anarchists."

The Specific Anarchist Organisation: Social Work and Insertion

Social work and insertion are the most important activities of the specific anarchist organisation.

As we have already dealt with, we live in a society that puts the ruling class and the exploited classes on opposing sides. Let us also remember that our struggle is for the establishment of a classless society – libertarian socialism. And that the way to reach this new society, in our opinion, is through the struggle of social movements, their conformation into the popular organisation and through the social revolution. To this end, this whole process must take place within the exploited classes, which are the true protagonists of the social transformation that we advocate.

Thus, if the struggle of anarchism points towards the final objectives of social revolution and libertarian socialism, and if we understand the exploited classes to be the protagonists of the transformation towards these goals, there is no other way for anarchism but to seek a way to interact with these classes. For this reason,

> anarchism can no longer continue trapped within the confines of marginal thought and claimed only by a few small groups, in their isolated actions. Its natural influence on the mentality of human groups in struggle is more than evident. For this influence to be consciously assimilated, it should now be in possession of new means and start the path of social practices now.[1]

In the class struggle the exploited classes are always in conflict with the ruling class. This conflict can manifest itself in a more or less spontaneous, or more or less organised way. The fact is that the contradictions of capitalism generate a series of manifestations of the exploited classes and we consider this to be the best terrain to plant the seeds of anarchism. Neno Vasco, speaking of the seed sower, used a metaphor to say that anarchists should plant their seeds in the most fertile terrain. As we have already emphasised, for us, this terrain is the camp of the class struggle.

Since we intend to plant our seeds within the class struggle, and because we understand the exploited classes to be the protagonists of the process of social transformation, we assume that for anarchism to reach its final objectives the exploited classes are essential. When we explain this point of view we are not idolising these classes or even assuming that everything they do is always right, but we are emphasising that their participation in the process of social transformation is absolutely central. Therefore, we anarchists, "must always be with the people"[2].

[1] Nestor Makhno. "Our Organisation". In: Organisation and Anarchy, p. 32.

[2] Errico Malatesta. "Programa Anarquista." In: Escritos Revolucionários, p. 23.

The way in which the specific anarchist organisation seeks interaction with the exploited classes is through what we call social work. Social work is the activity that the anarchist organisation performs in the midst of class struggle, causing anarchism to interact with the exploited classes. Social work gives to the political level of anarchism a social level, a body without which anarchism is sterile. Through social work anarchism is able to realise its function of being a motor for the struggles of our time. The social work of the anarchist organisation occurs in two ways: 1.) With the ongoing work with existing social movements and 2.) With the creation of new social movements.

Since our founding we have considered social movements to be the preferred terrain for our activity, as put in our Charter of Principles when we affirm: "the FARJ proposes to work – immediately and without inter-mediation – in the direction of intervening in the diverse realities that make up the universe of social movements"[3]. As we have discussed above, we understand the social movements as a result of "a tripod made up by necessity, will and organisation." Thus, organised anarchists must seek to stimulate the desire and organisation for a movement that is based primarily on the needs of the exploited classes. These, in most cases, are demobilised by "not having the sense of their rights, nor faith in their strength; and as they do not have this feeling, nor this faith, [...] remain, for centuries, powerless slaves"[4]. In this process of mobilisation we have to encourage this sense and this faith. From then, the question of need becomes central because it is through this that mobilisation occurs. Few are those who are willing to fight for an idea that will only bring long-term results. Therefore, to mobilise the people we must, before anything else, deal with the concrete issues and problems that afflict and are close to them. To earn their trust and adherence

> [...] We have to start talking to them, not about the general evils of the whole international proletariat, nor the general causes which give birth to it, but their particular misfortunes, daily and private. It is necessary to speak to them about their profession and the conditions of their work, precisely in the locality in which they dwell; of the duration and the vast extent of their daily work, the inadequacy of their salary, the wickedness of their boss, the scarcity of food and their inability to properly nurture and educate their family. And proposing to them the means to combat their misfortunes and to improve their position, there is no need to talk too soon about general and revolutionary objectives. [...] Firstly, it is only necessary to offer them objectives the usefulness of which their natural common sense and everyday experience cannot ignore, nor repel.[5]

In the same way, in the process of mobilisation you can pose the question of people not having jobs, of not having a place to live etc.. Therefore, the role of anarchist organisation is to explain necessities and to mobilise around them. Be it in the creation of social movements or working with existing movements the central idea is always to mobilise around necessity.

Social movements are the instances in which mobilisation of the exploited classes takes places and, therefore, it is these movements that cause them to have a political practice. Their political practice is developed through "any activity that has as its object the relationship [of confronta-

[3] FARJ. "Carta de Princípios."

[4] Mikhail Bakunin. "Some Conditions of the Revolution." In: Conceito de Liberdade, p. 127.

[5] Idem. "Militant Education." In: Conceito de Liberdade, pp. 145-146.

tion] of the exploited and oppressed with the bodies of political power; the state, government and their various expressions"[6] besides other supporting bodies of the capitalist system. Political practice seeks to put the people in combat against the forces of the system that oppresses them and, therefore, incites the facing-off of these forces, "the defence and expansion of public and individual freedoms, the capacity for proposals that correspond to the general interest of the population or partial aspects of it." Political practice can also be "insurrection as an instance of violent questioning of a situation we want to change [... and also] the proposals which, taking in the popular demands facing the bodies of power, can present solutions to general and specific questions and require those bodies to be able to adopt them and make them valid for the whole of society".

Through their political practice social movements must impose all their conquests on the forces of capitalism and the state. The people themselves must demand, enforce and realise all the improvements, conquests and freedoms desired as is felt necessary, by means of organisation and will. These demands must be permanent and increase progressively, each time demanding more and seeking the full emancipation of the exploited classes.

> Whatever the practical results of the struggle for immediate improvements may be, their main usefulness lies in the struggle itself. Is it through it that workers learn to defend their class interests, that they understand that the employers and governments have opposing interests to theirs, and that they cannot improve their conditions, much less emancipate themselves, if not by joining together and making themselves stronger. [...] If they can get what they want they will live better. They will earn more, work less, have more time and energy to reflect on the things that interest them; and they will suddenly feel more needs and desires. If they were not successful, they will be impelled to study the causes of their failure and to recognise the need for greater unity, increased energy; they will understand, finally, that in order to win, securely and definitely, it is necessary to destroy capitalism.[7]

The political practice of social movements translated into the struggle for short-term gains brings the pedagogical sense of increased consciousness to the militants, in the event of victories or even defeats.

The political practice of the specific anarchist organisation works the same way. We stated earlier that we understand anarchism as an ideology and, in this case, "a set of ideas, motivations, aspirations, values, a structure or system of concepts which have a direct connection with action – which we call political practice." Social work is the principal part of the political practice of the anarchist organisation that, in this case, interacts with the exploited classes organised into social movements, withdrawing anarchism from small circles and widely supplanting its ideas within the class struggle.

Besides this, for us, more than simply interacting with social movements the social work of the specific anarchist organisation must seek to influence them in practice, causing them to have certain operating characteristics. We call the process of influencing social movements through anarchist practice social insertion. Thus, the anarchist organisation has social work when it cre-

[6] FAU. "Declaración de Principios." The quotes in this paragraph are from this same document.

[7] Errico Malatesta. "Programa Anarquista." In: Escritos Revolucionários, p. 18.

ates or develops work with social movements, and social insertion when it manages to influence movements with anarchist practices.

Social insertion is not intended to "ideologise" social movements, turning them into anarchist social movements. By contrast, it seeks to give them certain determined characteristics so that they can proceed towards the construction and development of the popular organisation, and point towards the social revolution and libertarian socialism. It seeks to make social movements go as far as possible.

> We do not want "to wait for the masses to become anarchists" in order to make the revolution; even more than we are convinced that they will never become (anarchists) if initially we do not overthrow, with violence, the institutions that keep them in slavery. As we need the concurrence of the masses to build a sufficient material force, and to achieve our specific objective which is the radical change of the social organism through the direct action of the masses, we must get close to them, accept them as they are and, as part the masses, make them go as far as possible. This for we want, of course, to actually work to realise, in practice, our ideals and not to be content in preaching in the desert, for the simple satisfaction of our intellectual pride.[8]

We recall that we have advocated the position that it is ideology that should be within social movements, and not social movements that should be within ideology. The specific anarchist organisation interacts with social movements seeking to influence them to have the most libertarian and egalitarian forms possible.[9] Although we treat anarchism and social movements as different levels of activity, we believe that there is a relationship of mutual influence between the two. This complementary and dialectic relationship causes anarchism to influence social movements, and social movements to influence anarchism. When we deal with social insertion we are talking about the influence of anarchism within social movements. In this respect, despite sustaining a separation between the political (the anarchist organisation) and social (social movements) levels, we do not believe that there should be hierarchy or domination of the political level over the social level. We also do not believe that the political level struggles for the social level or in front of it, but with it – this being an ethical relationship. In its activity as an active minority the specific anarchist organisation struggles with the exploited classes and not for or in front of them, seeing as though "we do not want to emancipate the people, we want the people to emancipate themselves"[10]. We will discuss further on, in a little more detail, this relationship between the specific anarchist organisation and social movements.

When dealing with social insertion as the influence that the specific anarchist organisation exerts on the social movements, we understand that it is important to elaborate a little more on what we mean by "influence." To influence, for us, means to cause changes in a person or a group of people through persuasion, advice, examples, guidelines, insights and practices. First of all we believe that in society itself there are, at any given time, a multiplicity of influences

[8] Idem. "The Purpose of the Revolution." In: Anarchists, Socialists and Communists, P. 55.

[9] In "Em Torno de Nosso Anarquismo," Malatesta stresses: "To provoke, in as much as possible, the movement, participating in it with all our forces, by giving it a more egalitarian and libertarian character, that is; to support all progressive forces; to defend what is better when you cannot obtain the maximum, but always keeping very clear our anarchist character. " [Emphasis added] See Escritos Revolucionários, p. 80.

[10] Errico Malatesta. "The Organisation of the working masses ...". In: Escritos Revolucionários, p. 40.

between the different agents who influence and are influenced. We can even say that "to renounce exerting influence over others means renouncing social action, or even the expression of one's own thoughts and feelings, which is [...] tending towards in-existence"[11]. Even from an anti-authoritarian perspective, this influence is inevitable and healthy.

> In nature as in human society, which in itself is nothing other than nature, every human being is subject to the supreme condition of intervening in the most positive way in the lives of others – intervening in as powerful a manner as the specific nature of each individual permits. To reject this reciprocal influence means to conjure death in the full sense of the word. And when we ask for freedom for the masses we do not intend to have abolished the natural influence exerted on them by any individual or group of individuals.[12]

In practical work that influence must occur from the characteristics we seek to give social movements. Previously, when dealing with social movements and the popular organisation, we discussed these features in greater detail. So we are not concerned at this point with detailing them all again. We will only point out, once more and briefly, what the characteristics that we must sustain in the social movements are. They are: force, class struggle, combativeness, autonomy, direct action, direct democracy and revolutionary perspective.

Social movements must be strong, without falling inside an ideology, since imposing the cause of anarchism on social movements "would not be anything but a complete absence of thought, of objective and of common conduct, and [...] would lead, necessarily, to a common impotence "[13]. They should be class struggle in orientation and have a class line, which means to seek broad participation of the exploited classes and support the class struggle; they should be combative, establishing their conquests through the imposition of their social force; they should be autonomous in relation to the state, political parties, bureaucratic trade unions, the church, among other bureaucratic and/ or authoritarian bodies, taking their decisions and acting on their own.

In addition, they must use direct action as a form of political action, in opposition to representative democracy. "Fundamentally it comes to giving priority to the protagonism of the popular organisations, fighting for the least possible mediation and ensuring that the necessary mediation does not result in the emergence of separate decision-making centres separated from those concerned"[14]. Social movements must also use direct democracy as a method of decision-making, which takes place in horizontal assemblies in which all the militants decide effectively, in an egalitarian way. Direct democracy does not give space to "any kind of privilege, whether economic, social or political, [... and constitutes] an institutional framework where the recallability of the members is immediately secured and where, therefore, there is no room for the habitual political irresponsibility that characterises representative democracy"[15]. Finally, revolutionary perspective, which "should be introduced and developed in it [the social movement] by the con-

[11] Mikhail Bakunin. "Liberty and Equality." In: G. P. Maximoff (ed.). Writings of Political Philosophy Vol. II. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1990, p. 9.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Idem. "Tactics and Revolutionary Party Discipline." In: Conceito de Liberdade, p. 192.

[14] FAU. "Declaración de Principios."

[15] Ibid.

stant work of revolutionaries who work outside and within its bosom, but which cannot be the natural and normal manifestation of its function"[16].

The social insertion of the specific anarchist organisation in social movements that occurs through influence should point, in a second instance, towards the connection of struggles and the creation of the popular organisation, seeking permanently to increase their social force.

To carry out social work and insertion the anarchist organisation should pay attention to some questions.

Mobilisation must take place mainly through practice, since it is in the midst of struggle that the people notice that they can win more and more. Much more than talking, we must teach by doing, by example, which is "better than the verbal explanations that [the worker] receives from his comrades; quickly recognising all things by his own personal experience now inseparable and united with that of the other members"[17]. It is very relevant for us to consider that the process of mobilisation and influence passes, beyond the objective aspects of the struggle, through the subjective aspects. Our practice has shown that in order to mobilise and influence social movements it is very important to use not only the rational and objectives aspects, but also emotional and subjective aspects, these being the affective bonds and friendships or relationships that are naturally built within struggles. It is also important to identify people in the neighbourhoods, communities, movements, trade unions etc. that have influence over others (local leaders oriented to the grassroots and legitimised by them) and focus efforts on them. These people are very important to assist in grassroots mobilisation, to give potential to anarchist influence, or even to integrate into the groupings of tendency. Done in this way, the mobilisation ends up functioning as a kind of "conversion", it being important to note that

> [...] you can only convert those who feel the need to be converted, those who already have in their instincts or in the miseries of their position, either exterior or interior, all that they want to give them; you will never convert those who do not feel the need for any change, not even those who, wishing to leave a position in which they are discontent, are impelled, by the nature of their moral, intellectual and social habits, to seek a position in a world that is not of your ideas.[18]

In this process of mobilisation the specific anarchist organisation should always, no matter what, act ethically, trying not to want to establish relations of hierarchy or domination with the social movements; to tell the truth and never deceive the people, and always support solidarity and mutual aid in relation to other militants. Likewise, it should have a propositive posture, seeking to build movements and cause them to march forward and not just be presenting critical positions.

Even when the positions of the anarchist organisation are not the majority they must be shown, making clear the views it advocates. When in contact with hierarchical movements the anarchist organisation should always keep in mind that what interests it is always the grassroots of the social movements. Therefore, for any type of work, the organisation should always approach not the leaders and those who hold the power structures of social movements, but the rank-and-file

[16] Errico Malatesta. "Los Movimientos Obrero y los Anarchists." Excerpt from New Umanità, April 6, 1922. In: Vernon Richards. Op. p. 114.

[17] Mikhail Bakunin. "Militant Education." In: Conceito de Liberdade, p. 146.

[18] Ibid. "Workers, Peasants, and Intellectuals Bourgeois." In: Conceito de Liberdade, p. 110.

activists, who are generally oppressed by the leadership and form the periphery and not the centre of the movements.

Another issue that must be observed is that the militants of the specific anarchist organisation must be very familiar with the environment in which they are working, maintaining a constant presence in the social movements in which they propose to carry out social work. The knowledge of the "terrain" on which one operates is critical to knowing what the political forces at play are, who the potential allies are, who the opponents are, where the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are. Constant presence is important in order for the anarchist militants to be fully integrated with other activists from the social movements, such that they have recognition, legitimacy, are listened to, are wanted, are welcome people.

In a strategic framework we can understand that the specific anarchist organisation must carry out social work, since "as anarchists and workers, we must incite and encourage them [the workers] to struggle, and to struggle with them"[19]. Inciting and encouraging the people, we must seek social insertion and ensure that the social movements work in the most libertarian and egalitarian ways possible. With social insertion in social movements we must connect struggles and build the popular organisation. Thus will we be able to stimulate the permanent increase of social force and prepare the exploited classes for the social revolution, because "our goal is to prepare the people, morally and materially, for this necessary expropriation; it is to try and revive the attempt, as many times as revolutionary agitation gives us the opportunity to do so, until the final victory"[20], with the establishment of libertarian socialism. We can say, then, that the function of the specific anarchist organisation in its social work and insertion is to be the "engine of social struggles. An engine that neither replaces nor represents them"[21]. We think it possible to construct this motor "participating militantly in the day-to-day of the struggles of popular movements in activity, at first, in Brazil, in Latin America and especially in Rio de Janeiro."[22]

[19] Errico Malatesta. ”Programa Anarquista.” In: Escritos Revolucionários, p. 18.
[20] Ibid. p. 17.
[21] FAU. ”Declaración de Principios.”
[22] FARJ. ”Carta de Princípios.”

The Specific Anarchist Organisation: Production and Reproduction of Theory

Another important activity of the specific anarchist organisation is the production and reproduction of theory. We understand theory as "[a] set of concepts coherently articulated between themselves [...], an instrument, a tool, [that] serves to do a job, that serves to produce the knowledge that we need to produce"[1]. Theory is fundamental both for the conception of strategy, as well as for the propaganda that the organisation performs. Strategy seeks to increase the efficiency of work of the anarchist organisation while propaganda is very important in the sense of promoting anarchist ideas.

Thus, we understand this set of coherently articulated concepts – theory – as an indispensable tool for practice, in order to perform a specific job. Therefore, "if it does not serve us to produce new knowledge useful for political practice, theory is useless"[2].

On being produced within the specific anarchist organisation, theory formalises concepts in order to make the organisation: 1.) understand the reality in which it is acting, 2.) deal with making a prognosis of the objectives of the process of social transformation and 3.) define the actions that will be taken in order to put this process into practice. We call this scheme strategy, and will discuss it below in more detail.

In seeking to understand the reality in which one operates theory arranges information and data, formalises the understanding of the historical moment in which we operate and the definition of the social, political and economic characteristics. That is, it performs a complete diagnosis of the reality in which the specific anarchist organisation operates. In this case it is important, beyond general reading, to think regionally where one acts; as if this is not done you run the risk of applying methodology that is incorrect for the process of social transformation (the "importing" of ready-made theories from other times and other contexts). However, for us theory does not end there. It is through it that the anarchist organisation makes a prognosis of the objectives that the social transformation intends to imprint on the capitalist system. The conception of libertarian socialism and the revolutionary process of transformation can only be thought of, today, from a theoretical perspective, since in practice we are not living in a revolutionary time.

Thus, theory organises the concepts that define the transformation to the future society as well as that society itself, which are the final objectives of the specific anarchist organisation. Theory also defines how the anarchist organisation should act within the reality in which it finds itself in order to reach its final objectives. In this way, all the reflection that we do today about the complete process of social transformation that we intend to imprint on society is a theoretical reflection, since, despite being put into practice it does not happen completely, but partially, with the development of the steps concerning the beginning of the process. Other steps are reserved for the future and, today, can also only be thought of in a theoretical way.

[1] FAU. Huerta Grande: a Importância da Teoria.

[2] Ibid.

Theory is also very important in the process of propaganda, since to promote anarchist ideas it is necessary to articulate concepts coherently. Besides propaganda taking place – more broadly – in practice, theory also has a very relevant role therein. When theory is used for propaganda it formalises the past with the study and reproduction of anarchist theories, which have as an objective to deepen the ideological level and make anarchist ideology more known. It can also take place in relation to the present and the future with the theoretical spread of materials that explain our critiques of the present society, our conception of the future society and of the process of social transformation. It is also important that the production of theory aims to update obsolete ideological aspects or seeks to adapt ideology to specific and particular realities. This whole process of theoretical propaganda is fundamental to gather people around our cause. The more theory is produced and distributed, the easier will be the penetration of anarchism throughout society.

We understand that theory is fundamental to practice. When we work with correct and well-articulated concepts, the practice is much more efficient. "If there is no clear and concrete [theoretical] line, there is no effective political practice"[3] and the political will of the organisation runs a serious risk of being diluted.

Besides this, we do not believe that in order to act the anarchist organisation needs, before anything else, to have a deep and developed theory. In fact, there are organisations that believe that the big problem of anarchism is in the resolution, almost mathematically, of anarchist theory. For us, although we defend with emphasis that theory is very important for an efficient practice, we do not believe that theory produced without concrete and prolonged contact with practice can bear any promising fruit. The theory promoted by intellectuals removed from struggle or with little social work – intellectuals who think they have understood theory more than anyone else and have found definitive answers to the theoretical questions – is of little use, since it is in practice that we verify whether the theory serves for anything; practice that necessarily contributes to the theory. We do not believe, like many of these intellectuals, that just with theory we will necessarily have an efficient practice. If this theory was not constructed with ample and permanent contact with practice, the chance of it having little use is enormous.

When we started the introduction to this text with the subheading "to theorise efficiently it is essential to act"[4] we were referring exactly to the idea that for coherent and efficient theoretical production, there is no other way than to produce it, too, from practical experiences. In this case it is not always theory that determines practice. We believe that theory and practice are complementary and that from theory you practice, and from practice you theorise. If we can theorise today about our ideology it is because we are putting it to the "test" in our daily practice and verifying what works, what doesn't work, what is current and what needs to be updated. We know that, often, "in practice, the theory is other" and this applies above all to anarchism. Not everything that was produced or is produced theoretically within anarchism serves the practice we want. This also applies to aspects that are less ideological such as analysis of the conjuncture, evaluation of the political forces at play etc. that can even be interesting theories, but if they do not find coherence in practice, will not serve us for anything.

The important value that we attach to practice gives absolute importance to the process of social work and insertion. It puts anarchist ideology to the test, allowing the anarchist organisation

[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

to better think of its possibilities and horizons, to be much more programmatic, to act with its feet on the ground and to get on with life as it is, and not how we would like it to be. For this reason, social work and insertion enables one to perform with better precision all the theoretical production of the anarchist organisation.

From this relation of theory and practice we understand the theoretical way of the specific anarchist organisation as a constant way to theorise, practice, evaluate the theory and, if necessary, reformulate it, theorise, practice, and so on.

Many anarchist organisations define theory only as comprehension of the reality in which they are acting. In this way they separate theory from ideology, the first being this "set of concepts coherently articulated between themselves" that would serve only for the elaboration of answers to what we call "the first question of strategy", that is, "where we are". In this sense theory would come down to seek a deeper understanding of the reality in which you operate. On this we agree. However we believe, as we have specified above, that theory also serves to answer the second and third questions of strategy, that is, "where we want to reach"; and "how do we think we can leave where we are and arrive at where we want to be".

Thus, in this strategic framework theory is not limited to the first question, but also seeks to answer the second and third questions. Moreover, this theory implicated in strategy necessarily has ideological elements and, therefore, in this case theory and ideology, despite being distinct concepts, cannot be clearly separated. Theory necessarily carries ideological aspects and ideology necessarily carries theoretical aspects. There is, therefore, a direct link between one another.

From this understanding of the relation between theory and ideology we think that the specific anarchist organisation must work with what we call ideological and theoretical unity. This unity occurs through the decision-making process of the anarchist organisation and has as an objective to determine a clear political line (theoretical and ideological) that must, necessarily, guide all the activities and actions of the organisation which, "both as a whole as well as in the details, should be in exact and constant agreement"[5] with the line defined by the organisation. We do not believe that it would be possible to work with multiple theoretical and ideological conceptions without this signifying permanent conflicts and inefficient practices. The absence of this theoretical and ideological political line leads to a lack of articulation or even to conflicting articulation in the set of concepts, the result of which is incorrect, confusing and/or inefficient practice.

With this well-defined political line everyone knows how to act and, in case of having practical problems, it is well known that the line should be revised. When the theoretical and ideological line is not well defined and there is a problem, there are difficulties in knowing what needs to be revised. It is, therefore, the clarity of this line that allows the organisation to develop theoretically.

[5] Dielo Trouda. "Organisational Platform for a General Union of Anarchists"

The Specific Anarchist Organisation: Anarchist Propaganda

The specific anarchist organisation is also dedicated to anarchist propaganda. "Propaganda is not and cannot be but the constant, tireless repetition of the principles that must be our guide in the conduct that we must follow in the various circumstances of life."[1] Thus, we understand propaganda as the dissemination of the ideas of anarchism, and, therefore, as a fundamental activity of the anarchist organisation. Its objective is to make anarchism known and to attract people to our cause. Propaganda is one of the activities of the anarchist organisation and not the only activity. It should be performed constantly and in an organised manner.

"The organisation's propaganda must be done uninterruptedly, just as the propaganda of all the other postulates of the anarchist ideal".[2] To have strength propaganda needs to be performed constantly. Propaganda that is done once in a while is not enough to make anarchism known and, much less, to draw people in. Therefore, the first assertion that we make is that propaganda must be continuous.

Besides this, propaganda should not be done in an isolated way, since, like all uncoordinated activity, it lacks the desired strength. As we have seen organisation – understood as the co-ordination of forces for the realisation of an objective – multiplies the results of individual work, and this also applies to propaganda. When we are organised, the result of our propaganda work – be it theoretical or practical propaganda – is multiplied, and achieves results far superior to the simple sum of individual forces. Therefore, the second assertion that we make is that propaganda must be done in an organised way, because this multiplies its results.

> Casual, isolated propaganda which is often done to calm one's own conscience or simply to alleviate passion through discussion does little or nothing. Under the conditions of inconsistency and misery in which the masses are to be found, with so many forces that oppose them, such propaganda is forgotten before its efforts can accumulate and have fertile results. The terrain is very ungrateful for seeds sown at random to germinate and take root.[3]

We argue that the specific anarchist organisation utilises any means that are at its disposal for the realisation of this constant and organised propaganda. Firstly, with respect to the theoretical, educational and/or cultural sphere with the realisation of courses, talks, debates, conferences, study groups, websites, e-mail, theatre, bulletins, newspapers, magazines, books, videos, music, libraries, public events, radio programmes, television programmes, libertarian schools etc. We

[1] Errico Malatesta. "Programa Anarquista". In: Escritos Revolucionários, p. 7.

[2] Luigi Fabbri. "A Organização Anarquista". In: Anarco-Comunismo Italiano, p. 97.

[3] Errico Malatesta. "La Propaganda Anarquista". Excerpt from L'Agitazione, 22 de setembro de 1901. In: Vernon Richards. Op. Cit. p. 172.

truly value all this propaganda and think that it is fundamental in order to attract people and ensure that they know the critiques and also the constructive proposals of anarchism. Thus, it is possible to develop anti-authoritarian values in people, to stimulate their consciousness, to make them see the exploitation and domination in a more critical way such that they look at alternatives of struggle and organisation. These people can be approached, seeking to deepen their knowledge, to involve them in discussions and also to organise them for action.

This type of propaganda, when performed on a large scale is fundamental since it functions as a social "lubricant" that slowly changes the culture in which we live and makes the introduction of anarchist ideas and practices into society easier. This massive propaganda work slowly turns the people's consciousness and causes the ideology of capitalism, which is already transmitted in the form of culture, to be more questioned and even less reproduced. As we understand consciousness as a capacity that people have to know values and ethical principles and to apply them, we believe this propaganda activity to be highly relevant for the permanent gain of consciousness.

In the first instance is to remove prejudices and capitalist culture, then, to make people come to see authoritarianism critically. Finally, to take some of these people to the struggle against authoritarianism. We understand that any process of social transformation with final objectives like those that we propose will depend on acceptance, or at least on "non-rejection" of large sectors of the population. And propaganda, in this sense theoretical, educational and/or cultural will contribute significantly to this. Thus, "the propaganda carried out by organised anarchists is also a way of manifestation in order to prepare the future society: it is a collaboration in order to construct a way to influence the environment and to modify its conditions"[4] However, we must understand the limits of this propaganda.

Propaganda with respect to this theoretical, educational and/or cultural sphere has as its principal objective to increase the level of consciousness. Therefore, it aims to transform people's ideas. And this is the reason why we see serious limits in this model of propaganda. This gain in consciousness does not mean in any way that the exploitation and domination of capitalist society will tend to decrease. It also does not mean, necessarily, that people will go on to organise themselves in order to struggle. Today, the mainstream media and even the growth of the cities, community fragmentation, among other factors, make propaganda on a massive scale very difficult and we must remember that, even when there were no such difficulties, and when anarchist propaganda was very strong – with permanently functioning cultural centres, newspapers with very high daily runs – social transformation was not guaranteed. Ultimately, we can consider that even with all the difficulties that exist for us to realise "mass" propaganda, the gain in consciousness does not necessarily mean organisation and struggle and neither the end, or even a decrease, of exploitation and domination. We could say that, in a hypothetical situation in which everyone is conscious, nevertheless, we would continue to be exploited and dominated. Therefore,

> […] neither the writers, nor the philosophers, nor their works, not even the socialist newspapers constitute socialism alive and well. The latter can only find real existence in clarified revolutionary instinct, in collective will and in organisation […] – and when this instinct, this will and this organisation are lacking, the best books in the world are nothing but empty theories and impotent dreams.[5]

[4] Luigi Fabbri. "A Organização Anarquista". In: Anarco-Comunismo Italiano, pp. 115-116.
[5] Mikhail Bakunin. "Algumas Condições da Revolução". In: Conceito de Liberdade, p. 130.

For this reason we hold that, besides the propaganda that takes place in the theoretical, educational and/or cultural sphere we must also maintain, principally, propaganda that takes place in struggle and organisation, that is, propaganda in social work, aimed at social insertion.

By taking place in the ambit of the class struggle and of social movements, the work of anarchist propaganda aims to mobilise, organise and influence social movements with anarchist practice. We remember, insistently, that the influence of movements by anarchism means seeking for them to have the characteristics that we stand for: force, class struggle perspective, combativeness, autonomy, direct action, direct democracy and revolutionary perspective. To achieve this influence the specific anarchist organisation carries out its propaganda, emphatically, through words and, primarily, by example[6].

We understand the entire process of social work and insertion that we dealt with earlier as the main propaganda work that the anarchist organisation should develop. In struggle, while active minority, the anarchists create social movements, join already existing movements and seek to influence them as much as possible – always by example – to function in the most libertarian and egalitarian way possible. This work is, therefore,

> to educate for freedom, to elevate the consciousness of their [the workers'] own strength and capacity as men habituated to obedience and passivity. It is therefore necessary to proceed in a way in which the people act for themselves, or at least believe to be doing so out of instinct and self-inspiration, even though, in reality, the thing has been suggested to them.[7]

In this way anarchist propaganda serves the whole work process of the anarchists while active minority within social movements, and in the actual creation of the popular organisation.

When we perform anarchist propaganda we must think, necessarily, about the camp most conducive to it. We understand that the best propaganda is that which we realise among the social movements that give shape to the class struggle. Thus, seeking short-term gains, working among the people organised by need, we understand it to be possible to plant the seeds of our anarchism by means of propaganda, and carry society to a revolutionary process that opens the way to libertarian socialism. It is not that other alternatives do not serve us, but this reflection on "where and for whom to perform propaganda" must always be made.

[6] In the Regulations of the Geneva Section of the Alliance of Socialist Democracy, written by Bakunin, he recommends: "You cannot become a member without having accepted, sincerely and completely, all of its principles. The older members are obliged and the recent members have to promise to do around them, when possible, the msot active propaganda, both by their example, as well as by words" [our emphasis]. See Conception of Freedom, p. 201.

[7] Errico Malatesta. "La Propaganda Anarquista". Excerpt from L'Adunata dei Refrattari, 26 de dezembro de 1931. In: Vernon Richards. Op. Cit. p. 170.

The Specific Anarchist Organisation: Political Education, Relations, and Resource Management

Finally, we will deal a bit with the other activities of the specific anarchist organisation: political education, relations and resource management

Political education is fundamental to the functioning of the anarchist organisation. At the political level, of the specific anarchist organisation, education has as its main objective to increase the knowledge and theoretical and ideological depth of the militants of the organisation. It also gives support to new militants so that the differences in the level of education between the less and more educated should be as small as possible, and so that the high level of discussion within the organisation is not adversely affected by these differences. In general terms, political education promotes the theoretical and ideological development of the organisation and ensures unity. For the supporter militants of the specific anarchist organisation, political education provides the theoretical and ideological basis for its political line to be understood.

The political education of the political level deepens historical, current and future questions in the same way that knowledge about other ideological currents and social movements does. It is promoted in various ways: by courses and training books for militants, by education seminars, by the self-education that militants do by themselves, among others.

At the social level, of social movements, the anarchist organisation also works with political education in the sense of promoting the development of theory and ideology. This education serves, in the first place, to mobilise people. Then to educate grassroots militants and give the necessary support to enable them to develop theoretically and, if possible, join the groupings of tendency. Finally, political education seeks to develop the militants that act in the grouping of tendency and, having ideological affinities, integrate them into the anarchist organisation. This political education at the social level is fundamental to politicising militants. For the social movements to have the desired characteristics and for them to point to the construction of the popular organisation, it is fundamental that the militants are politicised as much as possible, and in this political education plays a significant role.

Practically, this political education of the social level may also occur in various ways: with the deepening of historical, current and future questions and with knowledge of anarchism and of social movements; with social education books and courses; with lectures and debates; among others.

Political education has a great importance throughout the movement intended for militancy within the logic of concentric circles presented earlier, both at the political level, and the social level.

The relations of the specific anarchist organisation are also fundamental and are divided, in the same way, into the social and political levels.

At the political level, the anarchist organisation seeks to relate to organisations, groups and individuals from all locations, such that this can contribute to its practice. Relations may be more or less organic, more or less formal. Either way, it is important to have partners, and to target larger confederate organisations that bring together different anarchist organisations. At the social level, it seeks to know and relate to social movements, linking itself more or less to them, or even to have contact with other organisms such as universities, councils, foundations, NGOs, human rights and ecological organisations etc.

Resource management of the specific anarchist organisation is done through self-support projects, which take place with the fundraising of the militants themselves, of other people or even through initiatives such as co-operatives and so on and that are fundamental in order to sustain the anarchist organisation and all its activities. Although being against the logic of capitalism, while we live within it we will have to raise and manage funds for the realisation of our activities. These funds are important: for the realisation of social works (transport of militants etc.); for the purchase of books; for the printing of propaganda material (pamphlets, newspapers, books, videos etc.); for structures for the organisation (maintenance of spaces etc.); for travel and other activities.

The Specific Anarchist Organisation: Relations of the Specific Anarchist Organisation with the Social Movements

We have, until now, dealt several times with the separation between the social and political levels of action. We intend to expose, in a little more detail, what we understand by each of these levels, the strengths and weaknesses of each and, especially, the way in which we understand them to be able to relate to one another.

For us, the social level is the ambit in which social movements are developed and in which we must seek to build and increase the social force of the popular organisation. It has social movements as favoured actors, but is not reduced to them. At this level, when we deal with social movements, we emphasise that they should not fit within an ideology, but should be formed around need; a common and concrete cause. They must be organised around concrete and pragmatic questions that seek, in case of victories, to improve the living conditions of the exploited classes. Social movements can be organised to struggle around the question of land, of housing, of work, to defend workers from the bosses, to demand improvements in the community, to advocate many other issues. Within these movements must be all those interested in the struggle around these issues and who would benefit if the struggle was victorious.

As we have seen, the more these social movements are organised and have the desired characteristics (force, class struggle, combativeness, autonomy, direct action, direct democracy and revolutionary perspective), the more they will be able to construct the popular organisation and permanently increase their social force. We understand that it is only with the convergence of the various social movements in the construction of the popular organisation that we will be able to overcome capitalism and the state, and build libertarian socialism through the social revolution. That is, the social level is the most important level for the social transformation that we intend to imprint on society and, without it, any changes that you think of may not produce results other than the creation of a new class of exploiters. Therefore, the social level is the main protagonist in the process of social transformation.

Nevertheless, as we have seen some characteristics are inherent to this social level, which end up complicating this process of social transformation (social movements –> popular organisation –> social revolution –> libertarian socialism). Firstly, because the various political forces that interact with the social movements, and the social movements themselves, often cause them not to have the desired characteristics for this process of transformation to happen.

The difficulties that arise from the authoritarian forces that act in the social movements are many: there are organisations that seek to ideologise the movements, causing them to be weak; there are organisations that try to harness them, causing them to function for their own purposes (that are different to the purposes of the movements); there are movements that do not seek the involvement of the exploited classes and end up becoming a “vanguard” detached from the grass-

roots; there are movements that function only with the help of governments and capitalists; there are movements completely tied to politicians, parties, and other authoritarian groupings; there are movements that want to elect candidates and only participate politically through representative democracy; there are movements that support hierarchical relations in which the leadership decides and the grassroots only obeys; there are reformist movements; there are isolated movements that do not want to connect with others; there are movements that do not produce theory and situational analysis, among many others.

Other difficulties arise from the actual operating of social movements. As they are always organised around short-term struggles, there is a very big risk that their ultimate objective ends up being the simple victory in these struggles. When this happens, many social movements become reformist movements – that is, movements whose aim is an adjustment or achievement within the capitalist system. Most of the time these short-term struggles distance social movements from revolutionary struggle. Moreover, as these movements are in most cases formed spontaneously, there is, undeniably, an organisational difficulty to carry out any long-term struggle. "Therefore, spontaneism, the spontaneous mobilisations of the masses, repercussion of an accumulation of unsolved problems that just 'pop up', if they are not properly channelled and instrumentalised, makes it is difficult to transcend the political plane in terms of changing power relations."[1] As we have seen, social movements are still subject to variations in situation, and they are, sometimes, responsible for demobilisation. These processes of ebb are also often responsible for them to lose the accumulation and learning in struggles.

That is, if on one hand the social level should be the main protagonist of social transformation, on the other it has serious limitations for this to happen. We understand that this transformation will be the result of an addition to this social level, made by the political level.

The political level is the ambit in which the specific anarchist organisation develops. Unlike the social level, the political level is an ideological level; an anarchist level. "The problem of power, decisive in profound social transformation, can only be solved at the political level, through political struggle. And this requires a specific form of organisation: the revolutionary political organisation."[2]

This political level must, necessarily, interact with the social level as we understand that without the social level, the political level is incapable of realising the desired social transformation. Thus, the political level absolutely needs the social level which, as we have said, is the protagonist of social transformation.

> Neither an insurrection, nor a prolonged process of struggle are possible on the backs of, or distant from the masses. The spontaneous predisposition of these, which it is the function of the political organisation to channel in terms of organisation and ideological development, always has an absolutely principal role. You cannot make a revolution on the sidelines or despite the people. And even less build a new social system without the initial support of at least a substantially large sector of the people.[3]

[1] Juan Mechoso. Op. Cit. p. 194.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid. p. 195.

The specific anarchist organisation aims to put into practice a revolutionary politics that conceives the means of reaching the final objectives (social revolution and libertarian socialism) with action always based on strategy. For this, it organises as active minority, co-ordinating the ideological militant activities that work as yeast for the struggles of the social level. The main activity undertaken by this political level is the social work that occurs when the political level interacts with the social level. In this contact the political level seeks to influence the social level as much as possible, causing it to function in the most libertarian and egalitarian way possible. We have seen that this can happen directly between the anarchist organisation and the social movements, or through groupings of tendency. From the moment that the political level obtains this – even partially – we say that it has social insertion. It is only through this social insertion that we understand it to be possible to build the popular organisation and, increasing its social force, reach the final objectives. Therefore, for us, as the political level needs the social level, so too does the social level need the political level.

> Hence the need for an ideological activity of explanation (and to have the elements necessary for it) that is not contradictory, but complements other levels of struggle (economic, military etc.). By ideological activity we do not mean, obviously, "educationalist" ideological preaching, which refers more-or-less exclusively to the diffusion of revolutionary "theory", even though, let us clarify, this also has its importance. Ideological activity is something more than the mere diffusion of theoretical knowledge. The facts, the actual political practice are ingredients, key elements for the integration of a level of revolutionary consciousness. [...] An essential ideological result is based on demonstrating before the people the prospect of victory, a journey of hope, of confidence in the possibility of a profound, revolutionary transformation. [...] And this "demonstrative" function [...] is the function of a politically organised minority, with an ideological level of consciousness that cannot be generated in the spontaneous practice of the masses. A level that implies the overcoming of spontaneism.[4]

Thus, we understand that the social and political levels are complimentary. This because the political level, in this process of influence that occurs when social insertion takes place, seeks to give to the social level the desired characteristics, which it often lacks – some because of the influence of authoritarian political forces, and others because of the workings of the social level itself.

In this interaction with the social level the political level should: fight in order that the movements are not ideologically driven; to avoid the negative influence of all the authoritarians, preventing them from using the social movements for their own ends; to involve the exploited classes as much as possible in the process of struggle and causing them to be the true protagonists of social transformation; to ensure that the movements do not live by the favours and aid of the ruling class, but that they impose their conquests by force; to ensure that the movements are not linked to politicians, parties and other authoritarian groupings; that they do not seek the election of representatives in the parliamentary system, but that they carry out their own politics; in order that everyone from the movements can discuss and deliberate all issues in the most democratic way possible; such that there is no hierarchy; such that the social movements use

[4] Ibid.

their short-term gains in order to build a long-term revolutionary project; such that the social movements connect and build the popular organisation; such that they assist in the elaboration and production of theory and the necessary analysis of the situation; such that spontaneity is transformed into organisation; such that, in case of ebbs, they do not lose the accumulation and learning of struggle.

The social level is characterised by strong ebbs and flows as it varies more than the political level in relation to the conjuncture. Thus, an important political level function it to ensure the continuity of ideology and the accumulation of struggles in times of ebbs (or even of flows) of the social level. This because "the [anarchist] political organisation is also the ambit in which is accumulated the experience of popular struggle, both at national and international level. An instance that prevents the dilution of knowledge that the exploited and oppressed acquire over time."[5] In times of flow of social movements the role of the specific anarchist organisation is to propel them. In times of ebbs, its role is "to keep the flame alight", or to wait and prepare for new opportunities to act.

> Anarchism does not aspire to the conquest of political power, to dictatorship. Its principal aspiration is to help the masses to take the authentic path of social revolution and the construction of socialism. But it is not enough that the masses take the path of the social revolution. It is also necessary to maintain this orientation of the revolution and its objectives: the suppression of capitalist society in the name of the society of free workers.[6]

Thus, the process of the political level influencing the social level seeks to ensure that it possesses the desired characteristics. In cases where they already exit, then the political level only accompanies; in case they do not exist, it struggles to make them exist.

When we define the political level as the specific anarchist organisation of active minority, we are seeking a meaning opposed to that of the authoritarian vanguard organisation. Authoritarians, while also proposing a distinction between the social and political levels, believe that the political level has a relationship of hierarchy and domination in relation to the social level. Thus, the hierarchy and domination from within the political level (of the authoritarian parties) is reproduced in its relations with the social level. Similarly do the authoritarians understand the reproduction of consciousness, which works with hierarchy and domination within the political level, and that in their understanding must be brought from the political level to the social level, from the "conscious" to the "unconscious". This is how the relationship of hierarchy and domination of the political level over the social level works. The relationship is not two-way, of the political to the social and vice versa, but rather a one-way relationship, of only the political to the social – that ends up being a transmission belt of the ideas of the political. The authoritarian idea, which supports the vanguard as a beam of light that intends to illuminate the path of the people, is an example of this. The social level, in darkness, would depend on the light of the political level. We know from diverse historical examples that, in this relationship in which the political level fights for the social, the political level obtains positions of privilege.

> But we anarchists cannot emancipate the people, we want the people to emancipate themselves. We do not believe in good that comes from above and is imposed by

[5] FAU. "Declaración de Principios".

[6] Dielo Trouda. "Organisational Platform for a General Union of Anarchists".

> force; we want the new mode of social life to surge from the people's belly, corresponding to the degree of development attained by man and that can progress as they progress. It is therefore important to us that all interests and all opinions find in conscious organisation the possibility of asserting themselves and influencing collective life in proportion to their importance.[7]

For any specific anarchist organisation the relationship between the social and political levels necessarily implies a serious discussion about the question of ethics. We have assumed from the beginning that: "the FARJ will respect the strong ethical principals that support it, promoting the development of a political culture based on respect for plurality of perspectives and affinity of objectives"[8].

It is through ethics, and only through these, that the anarchist organisation does not act as an authoritarian (even if revolutionary) party. The ethics of anarchism, unlike all other ideologies, holds a unique position on the relationship between the social and political levels. For this reason ethics are absolutely central to any anarchist organisation that wants to work with social movements. Unlike the vanguard organisation, the political level organised as active minority that acts with ethics doesn't have a relationship of hierarchy nor of domination in relation to the social level. For us, as we have emphasised, the social and political levels are complimentary and have a dialectical relationship. In this case, the political level complements the social level, as well as the social level complimenting the political.

Contrary to what the authoritarians propose, the ethics of horizontality that work within the specific anarchist organisation are reproduced in its relationship with social movements. When in contact with the social level the specific anarchist organisation acts with ethics and does not seek positions of privilege, it does not impose its will, does not dominate, does not deceive, does not alienate, it does not judge itself superior, it does not fight for social movements or in front of them. It struggles with social movements, not advancing even one step beyond what they intend to.

We understand that, from this ethical perspective of the political level, there is no fire that is not collectively lit; there is no going forward, illuminating the way of the people while the people themselves come behind in the dark. The objective of the active minority is, with ethics, to stimulate, to be shoulder-to-shoulder, giving solidarity when it is needed and requested. By this, unlike the vanguard, the active minority is legitimate.

> The individual application to support the social movement should be subject to the attitudes of those who intend to work in this situation. The supporter, or even legitimate organisational militant must demonstrate that they are willing to listen much more than to talk. They must become aware of the circumstances in which the natural members that make up the specific social movement in which they are acting live. As part of a whole, i.e., an organisation, they must grow with it and not define its paths and shape in an authoritarian and vertical way. It is important to remember that a collective construction process is always, and above all, a process of self-education. With time, if the proper codes of the group are followed, and only

[7] Errico Malatesta. "La Organización". Excerpt from L'Agitazione, 18 de junho de 1897. In: Vernon Richards. Op. Cit. p. 89.

[8] FARJ. "Carta de Princípios".

> then the supporter or militant will realise that the most important thing is to contrast their ideology with the reality of the group and not to try to reduce the social movement to their ideological certainties.[9]

This does not mean that we advocate a certain type of "grassroots-ism", which understands everything that the social movements advocate to be right. We know that the majority of the time these movements possess characteristics different to those we desire, and what's worse: from time to time make shifts to the right, and defend capitalist or even dictatorial positions, as was the case of fascism. Therefore, if on the one hand we do not believe that we should be in front of the social movements, we also do not believe that we should be behind them, following all their wishes. We want to be in a position of equality and, on seeing that they are distanced from the positions that we believe to be the most correct for the intended project of social transformation, we struggle internally and seek to influence them to have the characteristics already explained.

> It is not that we believe that the masses are always right, or that we want always to follow them in their changing moods. We have a programme, an ideal to make triumph, and that is why we distinguish ourselves from the mass and are party people. We want to act on it, propel it on the path that we believe to be best, but as our objective is to liberate and not to dominate, we want to habituate it to free initiative and free action.[10]

Besides this, contrary to the authoritarians, for us the social level influences and must always influence the political level. That is, the political level, by comparing its ideology with the practice of the social level will also have very important contributions that should be added to the anarchist organisation. We only believe it to be possible for the political level to conceive a consistent revolutionary strategy from the moment that it has contact with practice at the social level. Thus, we argue this two-way street between the political and the social also has a lot to contribute to the political level.

We think that this division between the social and political levels will be necessary until such time as the social revolution is consolidated and secured, with libertarian socialism in function. At this time, the political level should merge into the social level.

[9] Universidade Popular. Op. Cit.

[10] Errico Malatesta. "Enfim! O que é a 'Ditadura do Proletariado'". In: Anarquistas, Socialistas e Comunistas, p. 87.

The Specific Anarchist Organisation: The Need for Strategy, Tactics and Programme

It is essential that the specific anarchist organisation works with a strategy. We can define strategy from the formulation of answers to three questions: 1.) Where are we? 2.) Where do we want to go? 3.) How do we think we can leave where we are and arrive at where we want to be? Strategy is, then, the theoretical formulation of a diagnosis of the present situation, the conception of the situation one wants to reach and a set of actions that will aim to transform the present situation, causing it to reach the desired situation. We can also say that "we understand strategy as a set of elements, united in a systematic and coherent way that points towards great final objectives. [... and] unites the final objectives with the specific historical reality"[1].

Devising our strategy of social transformation is what we are trying to accomplish in this text. Firstly, reflecting on the first question and mapping capitalism and the state, which give body to the society of domination and exploitation, then; reflecting on the second question, trying to conceive our final objectives of social revolution and libertarian socialism. Finally, reflecting on the third question and proposing a social transformation that takes places through social movements, constituted into the popular organisation, in constant interaction with the specific anarchist organisation. All this while considering as priority the interests of the exploited classes. Thus, behind the conception of all this theoretical material is a strategic rationale. In this case strategy was used to conceive a proposal for the social transformation of the current society, seeking to channel it towards libertarian socialism – what we call permanent strategy; a very broad strategy for the realisation of our long-term goals.

Strategy can also be conceived in less broad, even restricted ways. Any action that the specific anarchist organisation, or even its militants, aims to carry out can be strategically conceived. A front of the anarchist organisation, for example, can conceive its work "responding" to the three questions above: 1.) Today we do not have insertion in the community movement of a particular neighbourhood that is growing a lot and we think that good work could be developed there. 2.) In one year we want to be able to carry out regular social work with some insertion. 3.) Therefore, we will try to approach this movement, getting to know it from closer, and start a permanent practice of social work, seeking social insertion.

Similarly a militant can, for example, make a proposal for political self-education, also responding to the three questions. 1.) I have deficiencies on a particular theoretical question that I believe is hampering my militancy. 2.) I would like to resolve this problem in six months, because I think this will open more possibilities for my militancy. 3.) I will do this, firstly, by conversing with the more experienced comrades in my organisation and asking for guidance on where I can find material on the subject, then I will read all the material and propose a debate with other com-

[1] FAU. Resoluciones Sobre el Tema Estrategia.

rades and, finally, I will formalise my ideas into a text and present it to the organisation for the comrades to give their opinions.

In short everything in the organisation, from the most complex to the most simple, can and should be done strategically.

In the specific anarchist organisation the question of strategy development is treated as follows. There should always be wide debate about strategy, including the three questions listed above. The specific anarchist organisation should seek to perform a diagnosis of the reality within which it operates, set the final long-term objectives and, most importantly, determine the different periods and cycles of struggle, each one with their respective objectives. This "macro" line (of diagnostics, medium- and long-term objectives) is called strategy, and the grand objectives (are called) the strategic objectives. Strategy, then, is detailed in a more "micro" line, or tactics, which determines the short-term objectives and the actions that are put into practice by militants or groups of militants that aim to achieve the short-term tactical objectives. Obviously, the achievement of tactical objectives should contribute to the approximation, or even to the achievement, of the strategic objectives.

When this strategic-tactical line of the organisation is established a plan of action is determined, and every militant has a well-defined function and clear objectives to be achieved. It is important to set deadlines for the accomplishment of actions, with assessments of the results at the end of each period or cycle. These assessments are done by evaluations of how the activities are proceeding, whether they are heading towards where we had imagined, if we were wrong about something. In sum: we see if we are moving towards the established objectives, or if we are distancing ourselves from them. If the former case, we correct the errors, make adjustments and proceed in the same way. If the latter, we change tactical actions and eventually the strategy, carrying out the same process again within a certain timeframe. It is this process of moving, evaluating, pursuing, re-evaluating etc. that causes the organisation to advance with strategy and to proceed correctly in the struggle. Thus,

> [...] strategy provides only general lines for a period. It is tactics that embody it in concrete, current reality translating it [the strategy] into deeds. The tactical options, as they respond to more precise, concrete and immediate problems can be more varied, more flexible. However, they cannot be in contradiction with the strategy. An adequate strategic-tactical conception has to take into account, as we have said, the actual situation and the period for which it provides.[2]

The strategy should be the same while the diagnosis of the reality in which one operates and the objectives are the same. "If the general situation experienced very important changes it would alter the conditions under which the organisation has to work and this, if it wanted to act effectively, would have to revise its strategy in order to adapt it to the new situation."[3] The objectives work in the same way. If the objectives change, for example in a post-revolutionary situation, the strategy can be modified. Hence the importance both of the comprehension of the actual situation in which we live, and also of the establishment of clear and precise objectives; essential components in the development of strategy, since "in politics there is no honest and useful

[2] Juan Mechoso. Op. Cit. p. 196.
[3] Ibid.

practice possible without a clearly defined theory and objective"[4]. The diagnosis of the present society that we intend to transform and "the end at which we wish to arrive, by will or by necessity" already [having been] established, "the great problem of life is to find the means that, according to the circumstances, leads with greater security and in the most economic way to the pre-determined end"[5].

The strategic line is formalised into a programme that guides all the actions of the organisation and its militants. "You must never renounce the revolutionary socialist programme, clearly established, both in form and in substance".[6] We understand, therefore, that

> strategy must come alive in a programme of action that establishes general guidelines for a period or stage. A programme must have its roots in the realities of the different levels of our society. Our strategy is unable to advance, to develop, if it does not have fluent contact with concrete problems that exist in the distinct situations that comprise a phase of action.[7]

That is, for the strategic line to be established and formalised into the programme contact with practice, which enables theory with knowledge, is essential. This contact will also enable the correct tactical unfolding of the strategy. The programme

> [...] constitutes the common platform for all the militants in the anarchist organisation. Without this platform, the only co-operation that you could have would be based on sentimental, vague and confused desires and would not have a real unity of perspectives.[...] The programme is not a set of secondary aspects that group (or, often, do not divide) people that think in a similar way, but a body of analysis and proposals that is only adopted by those that believe in it and who choose to spread this work and transform it into reality.[8]

Through the programme the specific anarchist organisation makes known its strategic proposal for social transformation. At the same time as it serves to guide the action of the militants of the organisation, it serves to mark the organisation's positions for other people who are not part of it, making public this set of analyses and proposals.

This set of strategy, tactics and programme gives the organisation a form of planned activities through which it is possible to obtain the best results. Planning is indispensable to any anarchist organisation.

The strategic conception of the specific anarchist organisation has, inevitably, an ideological component. Ideology

> constitutes an essential motor of political action and an inevitable component of any strategy. Every political practice assumes certain motives and a direction that is

[4] Mikhail Bakunin. "Programa Revolucionário e Programa Liberal". In: Conceito de Liberdade, p. 188.

[5] Errico Malatesta. "Los Fines y los Medios". Excerpt from L'En Dehors, 17 August 1892. In: Vernon Richards. Op. Cit. p. 69.

[6] Mikhail Bakunin. "Programa Revolucionário e Programa Liberal". In: Conceito de Liberdade, p. 188.

[7] FAU. Resoluciones Sobre el Tema Estrategia.

[8] George Fontenis. "Libertarian Communist Manifesto".

> only made clearly discernible by the extent to which it is explicit and organised as ideology.[9]

However, we must not confuse ideology and strategy. In relation to ideology strategy is much more flexible since it varies according to the social context, the current situation. Therefore, anarchist ideology may have different strategies, as each organisation operates in completely different contexts and situations. When we talk about tactics, it is an even greater truth. As the social composition of each location is different, as well as the political forces, government positions, reactionary forces etc. it is natural that in each context and conjuncture you apply different tactics to the political practice of anarchism. For example, there are places and contexts in which it is worth considering syndicalism as a space for social work, there are others in which it is not, and so on.

We stated earlier that the specific anarchist organisation should work with strategic and tactical unity, which occurs through the decision-making process described above, that seeks consensus and in cases where it is not possible opts for the vote, the majority winning. In this case all the militants of the organisation are required to follow the winning position. As with any other decision-making process, the issues are clearly posed, debated, and there is an attempt to reconcile the different points of view. This reconciliation not being possible, the organisation must summarise the main proposals and vote. Thus, the organisation decides, by consensus or by vote, the answers to the three questions of strategy. It formulates the tactical-strategic line and everyone goes in the same direction. It periodically evaluates this line, and can reformulate it.

We have stressed that all decisions are made collectively, without any kind of imposition. However, with established priorities and responsibilities each militant cannot do what they wish, by themselves. Each one has an obligation pertaining to the organisation to accomplish that which they committed to and that which was defined as a priority. Obviously, as we have emphasised, we must always try to reconcile the activities that each one likes to do with the responsibilities established by the organisation, but we do not always have to do only what we like.

The model of the specific anarchist organisation implies that the militants have to do things that they do not like very much or stop doing some of the things they like. This is to ensure that the organisation progresses with strategy. Progressing with strategy makes the anarchist organisation a coherent and effective organisation; an organisation dedicated to serious, committed militancy in which the militants do that which they have established as priority and work on the tasks that contribute in the most effective way possible to the consolidation of their strategic objectives. The relatively common practice of many anarchist groups and organisations performing different actions, to the left and to the right, while understanding that they are contributing to a common whole is not accepted. Contrary to this model, practice with strategy

> relates to not doing what one wants, nor isolatedly estimating everything that appears, nor being discouraged because the advance is not immediately visible. It deals with setting objectives and advancing towards them. Of choosing action and establishing priorities in support of these objectives. This clearly implies that there will be activities that we do not realise, events in which we are not involved. They can be important and even spectacular, but they do not count if they do not fit with

[9] Juan Mechoso. Op. Cit. p. 197.

> the proposals for the stage of our programme. In other cases we will be in absolute minority, or with major complications, in activities that are consistent with our objectives. To choose what we like most or what brings fewer complications is not correct politics.[10]

Returning to the issue of voting for the setting of strategy, it is important to state that who is deliberating is the organisation and not one individual or another. So when a strategic issue is settled by the vote, regardless of the vote of each one, all the militants of the organisation have the obligation to follow the collectively determined position. This is an important position in the model of organisation that we advocate because the collectively taken positions are not recommendations, but rather part of a strategic line that must necessarily be followed by all. For us, "organisation means co-ordination of forces with a common objective, and an obligation not to promote actions contrary to this objective"[11]. We must emphasise that the freedom to join an organisation is equal to the freedom to disconnect from one, and, in the case of an individual or minority often feeling neglected by the decisions of the majority, they have the freedom to split. It is important to emphasise that the strategic decisions, even if taken by means of a vote, are collective decisions and not individual disputes within the organisation.

In strategic terms this unity will allow for everyone in the organisation to row the boat in the same direction and can multiply the results of militant forces. Thus, everyone has a similar reading of where we are, were we want to go and how to progress from one point to another.

[10] FAU. Resoluciones Sobre el Tema Estrategia.

[11] Errico Malatesta. "A Organização II". In: Escritos Revolucionários, pp. 59-60.

Especifismo: Anarchist Organisation, Historical Perspectives and Influences

> The lack of visible organisation, normal and accepted by each one of its members makes possible the establishment of arbitrary, less libertarian organisations.
>
> **Luigi Fabbri**

Since the term '*especifismo*' arrived in Brazil in the mid-1990s there has been a series of polemics or even confusions around it. There were, and unfortunately still are people who say that *especifismo* is not anarchism; they accuse *especifista* organisations of being political parties, among other absurdities. When we identify the FARJ as a specific anarchist organisation we are seeking, more than anything else, to locate within the discussion about anarchist organisation what the positions that we espouse are.

The term *especifismo* was created by the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation (Federación Anarquista Uruguaya - FAU) and, by it, we refer to a conception of anarchist organisation that has two fundamental axes: organisation and social work/insertion. These two axes are based on the classical concepts of differentiated actuation of anarchism in the social and political levels (Bakuninist concept) and specific anarchist organisation (Malatestan concept). Therefore, the term *especifismo*, besides having been recently conceived, refers to anarchist organisational practices that have existed since the nineteenth century. In addition to these two axes, there is a series of other organisational questions that are defined within *especifismo* and that we seek to develop next. Therefore, the two main classical references of *especifismo* are Bakunin and Malatesta. This does not mean that we disregard other important theorists such as Proudhon and Kropotkin – we have used many of their theoretical references in this text – but we believe that, for the discussion on anarchist organisation, Bakunin and Malatesta have proposals more suitable for our work.

In the following paragraphs we intend to briefly resume some discussions that we've had throughout this text, and especially this last chapter, and locate them and compare them with other positions that exist within anarchism. We believe that more than affirming the positions we advocate – what we've done so far – it is fitting to realise a few fraternal critiques of other conceptions of organisation (or disorganisation) present within anarchism and, based on a few selected points, to compare our conceptions with others.

Perhaps the best contrast with the *especifista* model of organisation would be what we call the synthesis model, or synthesism. This model was theoretically formalised in two homonymous documents called 'The Anarchist Synthesis', one by Sebastièn Faure and the other by Volin. Historically and globally it was the Platform of Dielo Trouda that established this contrast. We intend to resume part of this debate about anarchist organisation although, in our view, *especifismo* is broader that Platformism – even though it [the latter] possesses a significant influence.

Synthesis advocates a model of anarchist organisation in which are all the anarchists (anarcho-communists, anarcho-syndicalists, anarcho-individualists etc.) and, therefore, it presents many

of the characteristics that we criticise below. We know that some of these characteristics are not necessarily linked to the synthesist model of organisation. However, it is undeniable that many of them are reproduced in organisations of this type, primarily through the influence of individualism, but not only this. We recognise that within synthesist organisations there are also serious militants committed to social anarchism and, therefore, we do not want the criticisms to seem generalised. Although we never question whether these organisations are anarchist (for us, they all are), they do not, in most cases, converge with our way of conceiving anarchist organisation.

First of all, when dealing in this text with the "specific anarchist organisation" from this particular perspective, we are not speaking about any anarchist organisation. There are diverse anarchist organisations that are not *especifista*. Therefore, *especifismo* implies much more than to advocate anarchist organisation.

The first difference is in the way of understanding anarchism itself. As we noted at the beginning of this text we understand anarchism as an ideology, that is, a "set of ideas, motivations, aspirations, values, a structure or system of concepts that have a direct connection with action – that which we call political practice". In this case we seek to differentiate this understanding of anarchism from another, purely abstract and theoretical, which only encourages free thinking, without necessarily conceiving a model of social transformation. Anarchism, thought of only from this model of critical observation of life, offers an aesthetic freedom and endless possibilities. However, if so conceived, it does not offer real possibilities of social transformation, since it is not put into practice, into action. It does not have the political practice that seeks the final objectives.

Especifismo advocates an anarchism that, as an ideology, seeks to conceive a model of performance that transforms the society of today into libertarian socialism by means of the social revolution. This process necessarily involves the organisation of the exploited classes into a popular organisation and demands the use of violence, understood primarily as a response to the violence of the current system. Other anarchist currents are against violence and believe that social transformation can take place in other ways.

Another difference is around the very question of organisation. For us, organisation is an absolutely central question when dealing with anarchism. Without it, we believe it to be impossible to conceive any serious political project which has the objective of arriving at the social revolution and libertarian socialism.

There are anarchist currents that support "anti-organisational" or even *spontaneist* positions, and believe that any form of organisation is authoritarian or averse to anarchism. For these currents, the formation of a desk to co-ordinate an assembly is authoritarian. Anyway, for these anarchists the struggle must take place spontaneously. The gains, if they come, must come spontaneously. The connection between struggles must be spontaneous and even capitalism and the state, if overthrown, would be done so by a spontaneous mobilisation. Perhaps, even after an eventual social revolution, things will evolve on their own, falling into place effortlessly. These anarchists believe that prior organisation is not necessary, others think that it is not even desirable.

Some anarchist individuals that defend these points of view and who are willing to do social work cannot deal with the authoritarian forces and, without the proper organisation, end up being labourers and "sleeves" for authoritarian projects or they leave frustrated because they cannot obtain spaces in social movements.

We noted earlier that we conceive of the specific anarchist organisation as an organisation of active minority. Thus, it is an organisation of anarchists that group themselves together at the political and ideological level and that carry out their main activity at the social level, which is broader, aiming to be the ferment of struggle. In the *especifista* model there is necessarily this differentiation between the political and social levels of activity.

Differently, there are anarchists who conceive of the anarchist organisation as a broad grouping that federates all those who call themselves anarchists, serving as a convergence space for the realisation of actions with complete autonomy. In anarchism, broadly speaking, this division between the social and political levels is also not accepted by all the currents, which understand the anarchist organisation in a diffuse manner, it being able to be a social movement, an organisation, an affinity group, a study group, a community, a co-operative etc.

Even the concept of anarcho-syndicalism, at various times, sought to suppress this difference between levels of activity, blending anarchist ideology with trade unionism. These and other attempts to ideologise social movements, in our understanding, weaken both the social movements – which no longer operate around concrete issues like land, housing, employment etc. – as well as anarchism itself, since it does not allow for the deepening of ideological struggles, which occur in the midst of the social movement. It also weakens, since the goal of these anarchists to turn all the militants of the social movements into anarchists is impossible, unless they significantly reduce and weaken the movements. In this way, or even on seeing that it is natural to find people of different ideologies in social movements that will never be anarchists, these anarchists get frustrated, and often shy away from struggles. As a consequence of this anarchism is often confined to itself.

The anarchist organisation of active minority is often understood, by other anarchist currents, as similar to the authoritarian vanguard organisation. As we have made sure to point out, when we conceive this separation between the social and political level we do not mean to say by this that we wish to be in front of the social movements, nor that the political level has any hierarchy or domination in relation to the social level.

There is also a difference in relation to the preferred space for the practice of anarchism. We *especifistas* believe that this space is the class struggle. Primarily because we consider that we live not only in a society, but in a class society. Regardless of how we think of the differences of these classes, it seems impossible to us to deny that domination and exploitation take place at different levels in our society and that the economic factor has a lot of influence on this. For us, anarchism was born among the people and that's where it should be, taking a clear position in favour of the exploited classes that are in permanent conflict in the class struggle. Therefore, when we talk about "where to sow the seeds of anarchism", for us it is clear that it has to be within the class struggle; in the spaces in which the contradictions of capitalism are most evident.

There are anarchists that do not support this class struggle bias of anarchism and, what is worse, there are those that accuse it of being *assistencialist*,[3] or of wanting "to apologise for the poor". Denying the class struggle, most of these anarchists believe that as the classic definition of bourgeois and proletarian classes does not take today's society into account, then one could say that classes no longer exist; or that this would be an anachronistic concept. We fundamentally disagree with these positions and believe that, regardless of how we define classes – whether

[3] In Brazilian political terminology *assistencialist* (*assistencialista*) is a term to denote someone that does things like, for example, NGOs when they distribute food to the poor. It is linked with charity.

we put more or less emphasis on the economic character etc. – it is undeniable that there are contexts and circumstances in which people suffer more from the effects of capitalism. And it is in these contexts and these circumstances that we want to prioritise our work.

When we seek to apply anarchism to the class struggle we assert what we call social work, and which we defined earlier as "the activity that the anarchist organisation performs in the midst of the class struggle, causing anarchism to interact with the exploited classes". As we also said, for us, this should be the main activity of the specific anarchist organisation. We argue that, through social work, the anarchist organisation should seek social insertion, "the process of influencing social movements through anarchist practice".

There are anarchists who do not defend this work with a view to social insertion. Part do not believe that it is a priority, and the other part, which is more complicated, believe that it is authoritarian. For anarchists who think that social work/ insertion is not a priority, it seems that other activities would be more effective in the development of anarchism – however it is often not stated. Besides, at least apparently, not having a strategic formulation what happens in practice is that these anarchists seek to work with propaganda, very restricted to publications, events and culture. As we have already emphasised, this propaganda is also central for us, but it is not enough if done without the backing of social work and insertion. With this support propaganda is much more effective. Therefore, propaganda, in *especifismo*, should be performed with these two biases: educational/ cultural and struggle with social movements.

Anarchists who do not believe that social work/ insertion are, nor should be a priority prefer to work in other mediums, far away from the class struggle, from social movements, from people of different ideologies. Some say that as members of society they already have social insertion. Often, they become sectarian, managing to get along only with their peers, and "ghettoising" anarchism. This explains the sectarianism of some anarchists, which occurs in much smaller proportion with specific organisations.

Much more complicated than the above position is the position advocated by anarchists that are against social work and insertion. These anarchists believe that as they are often not poor, as they are often not in social movements (they are not landless, for example) it is authoritarian to work with a poor community or even with social movements, since "they are from outside this reality". For them it is authoritarian for a person who has somewhere to live to support the struggle of the homeless; it is authoritarian to frequent a community movement without being from the community; it is authoritarian to support the waste-pickers' struggle if you are not one of them. For these anarchists there is only legitimacy in working with popular movements if you are a "popular", and if you are part of the reality of the movement. As these anarchists are generally not in these conditions, they do not approximate themselves to social movements nor to the class struggle. They end up making of their anarchism a "movement in itself", which is characterised by being essentially of the middle class and intellectuals, by not seeking contact with social and popular struggles, by not being in contact with people of different ideology. Indeed, this anarchism of the intellectual and middle class, when not seeking social work and insertion necessarily ends up in one of two ways. Either it abandon the proposal for social transformation, or constitute itself into a group that fights for the people, not with the people – assuming the position of vanguard and not of active minority.

Social work, for these militants, is often compared to the "entryism" of the authoritarian left – people that enter into social movements to make them work in their favour. In most cases they advocate spontaneity since "to come from outside", "to put anarchism within social movements"

is authoritarian. According to them ideas should arise spontaneously. They denounce discussion, persuasion, convincing, exchange, influence as external to social movements and, therefore, authoritarian.

We *especifistas* also radically disagree with this position against social work and insertion. As we explained, for us anarchism should not be confined to itself, nor shy away from social movements and people of different ideologies. It should serve as a tool, like yeast, as the engine of the struggle of our time. For this, anarchism, instead of hiding, should confront reality and seek to transform it. For this transformation it is useless "to preach to the converted"; we have, necessarily, to interact with non-anarchists.

Since we understand that class is not defined by origin but by the position that you advocate in the struggle, we believe that to support social movements, to assist mobilisations and organisations different to the reality in which you are included is an ethical obligation for any militant committed to the end of class society. Finally, we believe that social work brings necessary practice to anarchism, which has an immense contribution in the development of the theoretical and ideological line of the organisation. This activity is for us extremely important in our theoretical development, since it means that we theorise while having knowledge of reality and the practical application of anarchism in struggles. Groups and organisations that do not have social work tend to radicalise a discourse that does not have support in practice. When this happens, the tendency is for an ultra-radical and revolutionary discourse to exist – often accusing others of being reformists etc. – but that does not go beyond theory.

As we have seen, in *especifismo* there is ideological and theoretical unity, an alignment in relation to the theoretical and ideological aspects of anarchism. This political line is collectively constructed and everyone in the organisation is obliged to follow it. Because we consider anarchism something very broad, with very different or even contradictory positions, it appears necessary to us that, between all these positions, we must extract an ideological and theoretical line to be advocated and developed by the organisation. As we have emphasised this line must, necessarily, be linked to practice since we believe that "to theorise effectively it is essential to act".

For anarchists that do not advocate this unity the anarchist organisation could work with different ideological and theoretical lines. Each anarchist or group of anarchists may have their interpretation of anarchism and their own theory. This is motive for various conflicts and splits in organisations with this conception. As their is no agreement on initial questions the fights are frequent, as some think that anarchist should do work with social movements, others find this authoritarian and a "Marxist thing"; some think that the function of anarchism is to enhance the ego of individuals, others are radically against this, and so on. For us, there is no way to have an effective practice or even constitute an organisation without agreeing on some "initial questions". In organisations that do not work with ideological and theoretical unity there is no development in this direction, since with so many problems on the simplest questions, the most complex don't even come to be discussed. Bakunin was right when we said, "who embraces much, tightens little"[1]. It is important

> to understand that the division that exists between anarchists on this point is much deeper than is commonly believed, and that it equally implies an irreconcilable theoretical disagreement. I say this to respond to my good friends, who favouring an

[1] Mikhail Bakunin. "Programa Revolucionário e Programa Liberal". In: Conceito de Liberdade, p. 189.

> agreement at any price, claim: "We should not create problems of method! The idea is one alone and the goal is the same; we therefore remain united without being torn apart by a small disagreement over tactics". I, on the contrary, realised long ago that we are torn apart precisely because we're very close, because we are artificially close. Under the apparent veneer of the community of three or four ideas – abolition of the state, abolition of private property, revolution, anti-parliamentarianism – there is an enormous difference in the conception of each one of these theoretical statements. The difference is so great that it prevents us from taking the same path without prosecuting us and without reciprocally neutralising our work or, if we wanted to, remaining in peace without renouncing what we believe to be true. I repeat: there is not only a difference of method, but a big difference of ideas.[2]

Besides ideological and theoretical unity, *especifistas* advocate strategic and tactical unity. To act with strategy, as we have seen, implies taking into account a plan of all the practical actions performed by the organisation, seeking to verify where you are, where you want to go and how. Anarchism that works with strategic and tactical unity makes of planning and its alignment in practical application a strong organisational pillar. This because we believe that lack of strategy disperses efforts, causing many of them to be lost. We advocate a model in which a way forward is collectively discussed, and together with this path, we have established priorities and responsibilities assigned to militants. The priorities and responsibilities mean that everyone is not going to be able to do what passes through their head, whenever they want. Each one will have an obligation to the organisation to accomplish that which they undertook and that which was defined as a priority. Obviously we seek to reconcile the activities that each one likes to do with the priorities set by the organisation, but we don't always have to do only what we like to do. An *especifista* model implies that we have to do things that we don't like very much or to cease doing some things that we like a lot. This is to ensure that the organisation proceeds with strategy, with everyone rowing the boat in the same direction.

We criticise with emphasis organisations that do not work with strategy. For us it is not possible to work in an organisation in which each militant or group does what they think best, or simply that which they like to do, believing themselves to be contributing to a common whole. Generally, when anarchists of all types are grouped in an organisation, without having strategic affinities, there is no agreement on how to act. That is, it is not possible to establish a way of proceeding, and there is only one agreement: that things must keep going.

How do you conceive an organisation in which you seek to reconcile a group that believes it should act as a specific organisation in a social movement with a group that thinks that the priority should be social interaction among friends, group therapy or even the exaltation of the individual, considering work with social movements as authoritarian (or even Marxist or *assistencialist*)? There are two ways of managing these differences: either you discuss the issues, and live between fights and stress which consume a large part of the time; or you simply do not touch on the issues. Most organisations of this type opt for the second form.

> In order to establish a degree of co-ordination in action, necessary co-ordination, I believe, among people who tend toward the same goal, certain conditions are imposed:

[2] Luigi Fabbri. "A Organização Anarquista". In: Anarco-Comunismo Italiano, pp. 104-105.

> a number of rules linking each one to all, certain frequently revised pacts and agreements – if missing all this, if each one works as they please, the more serious people will find themselves in a situation where the efforts of some will be neutralised by those of others. From this will result disharmony and not the harmony and serene confidence to which we tend.[3]

Ideological and theoretical unity and strategic and tactical unity are attained through the collective decision-making process adopted by specific organisations, which is an attempt at consensus and, if this is not possible, the vote – the majority winning. As we have also emphasised, in this case the whole organisation adopts the winning decision. Differently, there are organisations that only work with consensus, often allowing one or other person to have an exacerbated influence on a decision-making process that involves a much larger number of people. Seeking consensus at any cost, and afraid of splitting, these organisations allow for one or another person to have a disproportionate weight in decisions, only in order to achieve consensus. Other times, they spend hours on discussions of little importance only to seek consensus. We have in mind that the decision-making process is a means and not an end in itself.

The obligation of everyone to follow the same path – which is a rule in *especifismo* – is a commitment that the organisation has to its strategy, because, if every time a decision taken does not please some of the militants, and this party refuses to perform the work, it will be impossible for the organisation to move forward. In the case of voting it is important to bear in mind that, at one time, some will win the vote and work on their proposal; at another time they will lose and work on the proposal of other comrades. With this form of decision-making it gives more importance to collective deliberations than to individual points of view.

There is a difference, even, on the central points that favour the specific organisation: the commitment, responsibility and self-discipline of militants within the organisation. In the *especifista* model there is a high level of this militant commitment. Thus, it is essential that the militants assume commitments before the organisation and implement them. Militant commitment imprints a link between militant and organisation, which is a mutual relationship in which the organisation is responsible for the militant, as well as the militant being responsible for the organisation. As well as the organisation owing satisfaction to the militant, the militant owes satisfaction to the organisation.

Lack of commitment, responsibility and self-discipline constitutes a major problem in many anarchist groups and organisations. It is very common for people to come together and to more-or-less participate in activities, doing only that which interests them, often participating in decisions, assuming commitments and not fulfilling them or, simply, not assuming commitments. There are lots of organisations that are compliant with this lack of militant commitment. It is undeniable that, for this reason, these organisations are "cooler" to be part of, however, they are not very effective from a militant point of view. As militancy, for us, is something necessary in the struggle for a free and egalitarian society we do not believe that it will always be "cool". If we had to choose between a more effective model of militancy and another more "cool", we would have to opt for effectiveness.

For work with militant commitment *especifismo* maintains an organisation with levels of commitment. As we have explained, we advocate the logic of concentric circles in which all militants

[3] Mikhail Bakunin. "Táctica e Disciplina do Partido Revolucionário". In: Conceito de Liberdade, pp. 197-198.

have a well-defined space in the organisation, a space which is determined by the level of commitment that the militant wants to assume. The more they want to commit themselves, the more inside the organisation they will be and the greater will be their deliberating power. Therefore, both at the political level as well as the social level there are well-defined entrance criteria, from the instances of supporter or groupings of tendency to the specific anarchist organisation. Only militants with ideological affinity with the organisation are inside the specific anarchist organisation.

Contrary to the *especifista* model, there are other organisations whose only criteria for the entrance of militants is their definition as anarchists, regardless of what conception of anarchism they have. Some people participate a bit in the organisation, others are more committed; some assume more responsibilities than others and all have the same power of deliberation. Thus, many deliberate on activities that they are not going to perform, that is, they determine what others will do. When an organisation allows for someone to deliberate something and not assume responsibilities, or that they assume responsibilities and do not meet them it allows for an authoritarianism of those who deliberate and put work on the backs of other comrades. Finally, in this other model, each one involves themselves in the way they perceive best, appearing when they think they should, and there is little emphasis on the question of militant commitment. Many, when they are questioned, claim themselves victims of authoritarianism. As we have explained, for us this model of organisation, besides overloading the more responsible militants, ends up by allowing this discrepancy of people who do not deliberate and work in the same proportion.

Therefore, we do not want to be this great "umbrella" that covers all types of anarchists. These broad (in)definitions apparently group more anarchists in the organisation, however, we believe that we should not opt for the criterion of quantity, but the quality of militants.

> There is no doubt that if we avoid properly specifying our true character the number of our adherents could become greater. [...] It is evident, on the other hand, that if we proclaim loudly our principles the number of our adherents will be less, but at least they will be serious adherents on whom we can count.[4]

A relevant difference also occurs around the issue of anarchist individualism. *Especifismo* means a complete and absolute rejection of anarchist individualism. For this reason it differs from other organisations that are willing to work with individualists. For us, there are two types of individualists in anarchism. One type, which was more common in the past, of people that prefer to work alone, but that have in mind the same project as us. In these people we only have to criticise the fact that, being disorganised, they cannot potentialise the results of their work. Another type, more in evidence today, renounces the socialist project. Based on the anarchist critique of the state they have little critique of capitalism, and no activity in the direction of socially transforming the reality in which we live. Putting themselves in the condition of simple critical observers of society, they construct an anarchism from secondary thinkers and references, simply around criticism. They don't have any societal project, much less coherent action that points towards this new society. We might ask:

> what then remains for us of anarchist individualism? The denial of class struggle, the denial of the principle of an anarchist organisation, whose purpose is the free society

[4] Idem. "Programa Revolucionário e Programa Liberal". In: Conceito de Liberdade, pp. 188-189.

> of equal workers: and even more, empty quackery encouraging workers unhappy with their existence to take part by resorting to personal solutions, supposedly open to them as liberated individuals.[5]

Thus they exacerbate the role of individual freedom, which, removed from collective freedom becomes merely an egotistical pleasure for the delight of a few who can, through their privileges within capitalism, afford it. In reality, individual freedom can only exist in collective freedom, for the slavery of others limits the freedom of each, and full individual freedom can only be realised at the moment in which, collectively, all are free. We agree with Bakunin when he said:

> I can only consider and feel myself free in the presence and in relation to other men. […] I am only truly free when all human beings around me, men and women, are equally free. The other's freedom, far from being a limitation or denial of my freedom, is, on the contrary, its necessary condition and confirmation. Only the freedom of others makes me truly free, in such a way that, the more numerous are the free men that surround me, and the more extensive and broad their freedom, the greater and deeper will become my freedom. […] My personal freedom thus confirmed by the freedom of all extends to infinity.[6]

For us it is impossible to seek individual freedom in a society like ours, in which millions do not have access to the most basic necessities of a human being. One cannot think of a purely individual anarchism as a way of positioning yourself in the world, of having a different lifestyle. For individualists, in most cases, to be an anarchist means to be an artist, a bohemian, to promote the sexual freedom of having open relationships or with more than one partner, to wear different clothes, to have a radical haircut, to behave extravagantly, to eat different foods, to define yourself personally, to fulfill yourself personally, to be against revolution (?!), to be against socialism (?!), to have a discourse without rhyme or reason – enjoying the freedom of aesthetics – in short, becoming apolitical. We disagree fundamentally with this position and believe that the influences in this direction are disastrous to anarchism, deterring serious and committed militants. Finally, we agree with Malatesta when he stressed:

> It is true we would like, all of us, to be in agreement and to unite into a single, powerful beam all the forces of anarchism. But we do not believe in the soundness of organisations made by the force of concessions and restrictions, where there is no real sympathy and agreement among members. It is better to be disunited than badly united.[7]

For us choosing the most appropriate model of anarchist organisation is crucial so that we have the most appropriate means, consistent with the ends we seek to achieve. If we advocate *especifismo*, which is a form of anarchist organisation, it is because we believe that it is today more suitable for the work we intend to perform. We understand that there are anarchists who do not agree with *especifismo*, and we do not think that they are less anarchist because of it. We only demand respect for our choice, such as we respect those who have made other choices.

[5] Dielo Trouda. "El Problema de la Organización y la Noción de Síntesis".

[6] Mikhail Bakunin. Império Knuto-Germânico. Cited in Daniel Guérin (org.). Textos Anarquistas (trechos de Ni Dieu, Ni Maître). Porto Alegre: LP&M, 2002, pp. 47-48.

[7] Errico Malatesta. "A Organização II". In: Escritos Revolucionários, p. 62.

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We now turn, briefly, to *especifismo's* historical perspective and influences. As we have seen the term *especifismo* was developed by the FAU and only arrived in Brazil in the late twentieth century. Nevertheless, this term, more than creating a new conception of anarchist organisation sought to group a series of already existing anarchist organisational conceptions, which took shape starting from the nineteenth century. The *especifismo* of the FAU asserts the influence of Bakunin and Malatesta, of the class struggle of anarcho-syndicalism, of expropriator anarchism; all this within a Latin American context. We will attempt to explain in the following paragraphs, from our own conception, how we understand the historic experience of *especifismo*: the main past experiences, in terms of anarchist organisation, which influence us today.

Especifismo's first historic reference is Bakunin, from the organisational conceptions that constituted the activity of the libertarians within the International Workers' Association (IWA), and which gave body to anarchism.

The IWA was articulated from the visits of the representatives of the French workers' associations to England, where they contacted English and exiled German union leaders – amongst the latter, Karl Marx. Politically, the composition of the IWA appeared heterogeneous: Marxists, Blanquists, republicans, trade unionists and Proudhonian federalists. The Marxists ended up by forming a majority in decision-making in the Central Committee, aligning themselves with members of other currents and taking control of that body. This situation persisted even after the substitution of the Central Committee by the General Council in the 1866 Geneva Congress. There one saw that the anarchists, be they inspired by Proudhon or followers of Bakunin, did not have any force in the central executive of the association. They were more influential through the grassroots, showing this in the congresses.

Two tendencies developed within the IWA: one centralist and one federalist. Among the authoritarian centralists stood out the communists, theoretically and politically guided by Marx, who counted on the IWA as an instrument to bring the proletariat into political power. They sought to constitute a workers' state apparatus for the transformation of capitalist society into communism through an intermediate period of re-organisation, necessarily to be undertaken under a dictatorship. Among the libertarian federalists were the anarchists, who advocated social revolution with the immediate abolition of all bodies of authority and the formation of a new society based on the free and federative organisation of workers, according to their occupations, problems and interests.

This basic divergence had been present from the beginning and was already clearly visible at the Geneva Congress, the first plenary meeting of the International. Against the authoritarians were the Proudhonian mutualists, who led the debate supported by collectivists that already belonged to the IWA before Bakunin had affiliated himself to it. In the Lausanne (1867) and Brussels (1868) Congresses collectivism had rapidly come to gain ground in relation to mutualism, and in Basel (1869) the collectivist attendance was in strong predominance among those averse to authority, and strengthened by the presence of Bakunin. In the competing camp Marx, while avoiding to make a personal commitment in the congresses, made his interventions through programmes, reports, newsletters and proposals of the Council. In Basel, Bakunin presented a proposal against the right of inheritance. Marx opposed him, but the proposal was approved.

Still in the context of the IWA Bakunin, together with other anarchist militants, formed the Alliance of Socialist Democracy, which would be accepted as a section of the IWA in 1869. We

understand the Alliance as a specific anarchist organisation (political level) that operated within the IWA (social level). The Alliance was an organisation of active minority composed of the "most secure, most dedicated, most intelligent and most energetic members, in a word, by the closest"[8]. It was formed to act secretly in order to address the issues that one could not publicly address and to act as a catalyst in the labour movement. The Alliance defined the relation between the social and political levels:

> The Alliance is the necessary complement of the International... – But the International and the Alliance, while tending towards the same final objective, pursue different goals at the same time. One has as its mission to unite the labouring masses, the millions of workers, across the differences of nations and of countries, across the borders of all states, into one immense and compact body; the other, the Alliance, has as its mission to give to the masses a truly revolutionary direction. The programmes of the one and the other, without being opposites at all, are different by the degree of their respective development. That of the International, if we take it seriously, is also in germ, but only in germ, the whole programme of the Alliance. The programme of the Alliance is the ultimate explanation of the programme of the International.[9]

The practice of the Alliance within the IWA caused the authoritarian tendency to seek to isolate and discredit the practice of the libertarians. After the Basel Congress attacks on the collectivist group intensified. In 1870 Marx directed two private communications of the General Council to the IWA sections, with severe criticisms of the Bakuninist positions. With this he prepared the climate for the London Conference of the following year, during which the Marxist group attempted to impose the doctrine of the conquest of state power, and for the Hague Congress of 1872. In this plenary, he urged for the expulsion of Bakunin from the IWA, which he obtained. By 1874 the International was defunct.

The second historical reference of *especifismo* is Malatesta, a militant who came to join the Bakuninist Alliance and who was a representative of the *organisationalist* current of anarchist communism. Following the collectivist tradition of the anarchism of Bakunin's time – which advocated, in the future society, distribution to each according to their work – was born the anarchist communist current – which has since then advocated distribution to each according to their needs. Malatesta was characterised by defending, within this current, positions against evolutionism and scientism present in a large part of the socialist movement. For Malatesta, the future would not be necessarily determined and could only be modified by will, by a voluntarist intervention in events in order to provide the desired social transformation.

Outspoken critic of individualism, Malatesta advocated an anarchism based completely on organisation, an anarchism that we could call "*organisationalist*", and that, like the anarchism of Bakunin, maintained a distinct role at the social and political level. At the political level, Malatesta developed his conception of the specific anarchist organisation, which he called the anarchist party[10]: "by anarchist party we understand all those who want to contribute to achieving anar-

[8] Mikhail Bakunin. "Educação Militante". In: Conceito de Liberdade, p. 154.

[9] Ibid. pp. 151-152.

[10] Do not confuse the term party used here with the parties that compete in elections or that seek to take the state through revolution. As we have already stressed, "anarchist party" for Malatesta is the same thing as specific anarchist organisation.

chy, and that, consequently, they need to set an objective to be achieved and a road to travel"[11]. This organisation should act in the so-called "mass movements" of the time and influence them as much as possible, and the unions were the preferred terrain chosen for anarchist activity. Malatesta clearly pointed out the differences between the political level of anarchism and the social level, the space of insertion which was constituted, at the time, by syndicalism:

> In my opinion, the labour movement is no more than a means – though there is no doubt that it is the best means we have. But I refuse to accept this means as an end [...]. Syndicalists, on the other hand, have a certain propensity to transform the means into ends and consider the parts as a whole. And, in this way, for some of us syndicalism begins to be transformed into a new doctrine that threatens the very existence of anarchism. [...] I lamented, in the past, that comrades isolated themselves from the labour movement. I lament today that, at the other extreme, many of us allow ourselves to be swallowed by the same movement. Once again, the organisation of the working class, the strike, direct action, boycott, sabotage and armed insurrection itself are only the means; anarchy is the end.[12]

Advocating an anarchism that seeks social transformation from will, Malatesta believed, as we believe today, that the specific anarchist organisation should act within the class struggle, in the midst of the social movements and, with them, reach the social revolution and libertarian socialism – which he called anarchy. For this Malatesta sought to create both specific anarchist organisations, as in the case of the Italian Anarchist Revolutionary Socialist Party and the Italian Anarchist Union; as well as organisations that acted at the social level, as in the cases of the Italian Syndical Union (USI), the Labour Alliance, and the unions in Argentina. The positions of Malatesta were widely disseminated by Luigi Fabbri, another Italian anarchist communist, who also made significant contribution to *especifismo*.

An important experience for *especifismo*, in our conception, was also that of *Magonismo* in the radical phase of the Mexican Liberal Party (PLM). Ricardo Flores Magón, its most active militant, joined the PLM in 1901 – it having been founded a year earlier. During the Porfírio Diaz dictatorship both the PLM and the journal *Regeneración* were major opponents of the regime. From the second half of the 1900s the PLM radicalised, taking a more combative discourse and creating an internal tension within the party, which removed the less radical elements. The PLM did not compete in elections and served only as a space for the political and horizontal articulation of the libertarian revolutionaries of the time – without objectives of taking the state and establishing a dictatorship – to put an end to the Diaz government, establishing libertarian communism in turn. The PLM became clandestine and organised more than 40 armed resistance groups throughout Mexico and also had indigenous members, known for their struggle for community rights and against capitalist property. After the radicalisation, Francisco Madero disagreed that peaceful means to take Diaz's power would be exhausted.

The electoral fraud of 1910 led by Diaz would initiate the explosion of the Mexican Revolution. With the arrest of Madero his opponent in the elections managed to get himself re-elected. Exiled in San Antonio, Texas, Madero drew up the San Luis Plan, calling for an armed uprising, besides declaring null the 1910 elections, rejecting the election of Diaz and instituting himself as provi-

[11] Errico Malatesta. "A Organização II". In: Escritos Revolucionários, p. 56.

[12] Idem. "Sindicalismo: a crítica de um anarquista". In: George Woodcock. Op. Cit. pp. 208; 212.

sional president. Many rebels responded to the revolutionary call; among them Emiliano Zapata, who played an important role in the organisation of the indigenous people of the Morelos region, and Pancho Villa, a former cattle thief and bank robber, long recognised by the humble of the Durango and Chihuahua regions. They were united in an anti-re-electionist front, which gave each group a relative degree of autonomy and independence. In 1911, in the midst of the revolution and with the support of the North American Industrial Worker of the World (IWW) union the anarchists, with Magón at the fore, occupied the region of Baja California, taking important cities like Mexicali. At the end of January they constituted the Socialist Republic of Baja California, the first socialist republic in the world. The *Magonistas* also had victories in cities such as Nuevo Leon, Chihuahua, Sonora, Guadalupe and Casas Grandes; spaces that would be lost after the repression occasioned by the Madero government.

The revolts organised by Zapata in Morelos and the Ayala Plan constituted themselves as instruments of the peasants' struggle for the revolution, always inspired by the slogan, "Land and Freedom", first sung by Praxédis Guerrero and spread by the *Magonistas*. Fruit of this important relationship between *Zapatistas* and *Magonistas* was Zapata's invitation for Magón to bring *Regeneración* to Morelos.

After that Mexico sank into a period of civil war and tried to establish a Convention at the end of 1914. The events that took place in sequence, like the attempted taking of Mexico City by Villa and Zapata, the convening of the Constituent Assembly by Carranza, who would later be elected president and then be assassinated; and the conflicts that followed in the country eventually ended up forming the backdrop of the decline of the revolutionary period in the country.

Another important historic reference to *especifismo* is the anarchist participation in the Russian Revolution. In early 1917 several regiments mutinied in St. Petersburg, a provisional government arose acclaimed by parliament and the soviets of 1905 were reborn. The slogan, "all power to the soviets" was evident. In the field, in southern Ukraine the peasants of Gulyai-Polye, a village that since the 1905 revolution had had strong anarchist organisation, founded the Peasants Union; which decided to fight for the social revolution independent of the government, seeking self-management of the means of production. In Petrograd it claimed workers' control in the factories and Kronstadt sailors, carrying red and black flags, marched on the city with the goal of instituting a soviet and self-managed republic. In October anarchist and Bolshevik soldiers acting in concert were able to take the Winter Palace, then came a divide between the authoritarian and libertarian revolutionary elements. The former were for seizing the state apparatus and moving towards the dictatorship of the (Bolshevik) Party, directed by an all-powerful central committee; the latter for libertarian and self-managed communism in the form of councils of soviets of workers, peasants and the people in arms.

Progressively, the Bolsheviks began to deny, suppress, impede and, finally, prohibit the spread of libertarian ideas and practices. As early as 1918 the Bolsheviks positioned themselves against the workers' control of factories, encouraging the blind discipline of workers to the party, and were gradually consolidating the prohibition of opposition to the party. They militarised labour, expelled elected leaders from the soviets, forced these [the soviets] to submit to the central power of the party and prohibited strikes.

In the struggle against the White Army the insurrectionary army of Makhno in the Ukraine allied with the Bolsheviks more than once. On defeating the White threat the Makhnovist army was attacked and persecuted by the Red Army, forcing the survivors to take refuge in other countries. It was the end of the process of self-managed socialisation in the Ukraine, repressively

reversed by the Bolsheviks in favour of statist and totalitarian forms of organisation and social control under a new ruling class. The Kronstadt sailors – who demanded that the delegates to the soviets go back to being chosen by election; freedom for anarchists and other leftist groups; that unions and peasant organisations return to being united; the release of political prisoners; the abolition of political officers; and the same food for all – were killed by the Bolsheviks.

Despite this proletarian and libertarian revolution having been usurped and dominated by the Bolsheviks, as from their seizure of the state apparatus, the anarchists sinned by omission on the matter of organisation. This reflection was formalised years later by Russian immigrants who were in Europe, in a document called the Organisational Platform of Libertarian Communists. Makhno, Arshinov and others formalised in this document their considerations on anarchist organisation, informed by the experiences of the Russian Revolution. This document brought forward important insights about the importance of the involvement of anarchists in the class struggle, the need for a violent social revolution that overthrows capitalism and the state and that establishes libertarian communism. There is also an important contribution on the question of the transition from capitalism to libertarian communism and on the defence of the revolution. The Platform advocates an anarchist organisation, at the political level, that acts in the midst of social movements, a social level, and emphasises the role of active minority of the anarchist organisation. Moreover, it makes important contributions on the model of organisation of the political level of the anarchists. For these reasons, it is an important document and has considerable influence in *especifismo*.

However, we do not believe that *especifismo* is the same thing as Platformism. As we have been trying to show throughout this text, for us, especifismo is much broader than Platformism and has its theoretical basis in the organisational conceptions of Bakunin and Malatesta. For us, the Platform both draws from these authors and brings new contributions and should therefore be considered as a contribution to *especifismo*, but not the most important contribution. Another factor to be taken into account is that the Platform was written about an experience of the military action of anarchists in the midst of a revolutionary process, and should not be removed from this context. We understand that this form of organisation, as expressed in the Platform, should not be applied in all its details in non-revolutionary situations. It is more a contribution to the discussion of anarchist military action than a document to discuss anarchist organisation in all different contexts.

As with the Russian Revolution, we also consider the Spanish Revolution of 1936 a reference. During those years a social revolution was effectively carried out. A revolution under fire that wanted to reach all sectors, from unjust economic structures to the daily life of the population; from the decrepit notions of hierarchy to the historic inequalities between men and women. And all this was the work of the anarchists.

The influences of anarchism were brought to Spain by Giuseppe Fanelli, *alliancist* and militant very close to Bakunin. Founded in 1910, the National Confederation of Labour (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo - CNT) was the greatest expression of anarcho-syndicalism in Spain and lived, until the 1920s, between moments of ebb and flow with constant repression, of which it was victim. Founded in 1927, the Iberian Anarchist Federation (Federación Anarquista Ibérica - FAI) was a clandestine organisation dedicated to revolutionary activity which, among its objectives, sought to oppose the reformist currents in the CNT. The action achieved success, and the revolutionary anarchists obtained hegemony in the CNT.

In 1936 the Popular Front (bringing together the parties of the left) was able to win at the polls. The anarchists of the CNT ended up tactically supporting the Front because this would mean the release of imprisoned comrades. With the endorsement of the CNT the victory of the Popular Front was made possible. However, the fascists did not accept the defeat. On July 18,1936, the Phalangist coup movement breaks out, among which Francisco Franco stood out. Thus began the revolutionary explosion that would throw the country into three years of civil war. In the first phase (July 1936 to early 1937) the anarchists are among the most prominent groups. The action of militants in areas such as Catalonia was exemplary. The republican structures turned into popular organisations in an intense and successful process of collectivisation. Factories were occupied and immediate social measures put into practice, such as: equal pay between men and women, free medical service, permanent salary in case of sickness, reduced working hours and increased pay. Metallurgical, timber industry, transport, food, health, media and entertainment services and rural properties were collectivised. In order to combat the fascist forces they set up militias that advanced on some fronts, especially the column headed by Buenaventura Durruti.

In the second phase (1937 to 1939) the progress of the counter-revolution was devastating. The Phalangists had massive support from Hitler and Mussolini. The resistance was poorly armed and outnumbered. The International Brigades, formed to halt the Nazi-Fascist advance, had few fighters. Furthermore there was no help from the liberal nations (France and England), which once again washed their hands. The "support" from the USSR proved to be a true "Trojan Horse". Within the struggle against fascism a parallel hunt – promoted by the Stalinists – for the anarchists and unorthodox Labour Party of Marxist Unification (POUM) was taking place. The advances made by the CNT/FAI were destroyed by those who sought to re-establish the foundations of the state (moderate sectors of the Republic, Communists and Socialists). The Communists began to gain key positions in the government. The anarchists had to give in once more to unfavourable circumstances: some members of the CNT ended up participating in the government.

In Brazil we can say that, since the *especifista* current was not in fact realised in its fullness, our ideological references relate to some initiatives of the past and others we think signatories of the same current in the country's more recent history. We understand that from the earliest years of the twentieth century anarchists linked to "organisationalism", in particular followers of Malatesta, struggled to organise a possible number of comrades with a view to forming an organisation with common strategies and tactics, based on tactical agreements and clear group understanding.

It was these who were responsible for conducting the First Congress of Brazilian Workers in 1906, through the initiatives of the most breathtaking of the national anarchism. These anarchists prepared the conditions that allowed for the full insertion of anarchists in the unions and in social life, with the formation of schools and theatre groups, besides a reasonable written production. It was also, to a large extent, the "organisationalist" current that eventually helped in the preparation of the Anarchist Insurrection of 1918, the creation of the Anarchist Alliance of Rio de Janeiro, in the formation of the Brazilian Communist Party, libertarian in feature, and in the events that distinguished the anarchists from the Bolsheviks in the 1920s.

In this first phase the names of Neno Vasco, José Oiticica, Domingos Passos, Juan Peres Bouzas, Astrojildo Pereira (until 1920) and Fábio Luz stand out. Later, after social anarchism had been in slumber for almost two decades, part of the organisationalist tradition resurfaced in the journal Ação Direta (Direct Action) and then, with the consummation of the 1964 military coup we again

lose our main force in this camp, represented by Ideal Peres and the students of the Libertarian Student Movement (Movimento Estudantil Libertário - MEL).

Finally, another Latin influence on *especifismo* that we advocate is the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation (Federación Anarquista Uruguyaya - FAU), formed in 1956 of class struggle and anarcho-syndicalist influences, of the organisational models of Bakunin and Malatesta, and of the expropriator anarchism from the Plate River region. Seeking to develop an anarchism that confronts Latino problems the FAU has, since its creation, performed work in various fronts. It participated in the trade union activities of the National Convention of Workers (CNT), which had a non-bureaucratic model with internal democracy and class struggle tendencies. Direct action associations were established within the so-called Combative Tendency. With its illegality being enacted in 1967 the FAU went underground.

Even during this period of clandestinity, with a lot of repression and the arrest of militants, the FAU managed to maintain their union activity in the CNT, in the student movement and in the struggle against the collaborationism of the Communist Party (CP). It circulated its publication *Cartas de la FAU* (Letters from the FAU). In 1968 Workers-Student Resistance (ROE) was founded, a mass organisation body which adopted a confrontational strategy, with factory occupations with student participation and trade unionists in student demonstrations. At the end of the 1960s, parallel to the mass organisation, the FAU developed the organisation of its "armed wing", the People's Revolutionary Organisation - 33 (Organización Popular Revolucionaria - 33, OPR-33), which realised a series of sabotage actions, economic expropriations, kidnappings of politicians and/ or bosses particularly hated by the people, armed support for strikes and workplace occupations etc. The FAU abandoned focalism as a paradigm of armed struggle, avoiding militarisation while possessing social insertion in the population. With the dictatorship of 1973 the FAU directed its efforts towards a general strike that paralysed the country for nearly a month. It carried out clandestine work and had several militants arrested, tortured and killed. With the political opening it re-articulated itself and developed its work on the *especifista* model which we advocate today, with three fronts of insertion: union, student, and community.

In short, our conception of the historical references of *especifismo* is not dogmatic. We have broad ideas that start with the ideas of Bakunin and the *alliancists* in the IWA, go through the conceptions of Malatesta and his practical experiences at the social and political levels, as well as the experiences of Magón and the PLM in the Mexican Revolution. We are also influenced by the experiences of the anarchists in the Russian Revolution, with emphasis on the Makhnovists in the Ukraine and the organisational reflections made by the Russians in exile, as well as the experiences of the anarchists in the Spanish Revolution around the CNT-FAI. In Brazil, we have influences from anarchist "organisationalism", highlighting the experiences of the 1918 Anarchist Alliance of Rio de Janeiro and the 1919 (libertarian) Communist Party. Finally, the influences of the FAU, both in their struggle against the dictatorship, as in their activity in fronts with unions, community and student movements. This whole set of conceptions and experiences contributes today to our conception of *especifismo*. Currently, *especifismo* is advocated by various Latin American organisations and developed in practice, even if not by this name, in other parts of the world.

Notes and Conclusion

> To work comrades! The task is great. To work, everyone!
>
> **Errico Malatesta**

The 1st Congress completely fulfilled its objectives, taking place in an atmosphere of great solidarity between militants. It provided the due space for reflections, comments, debates and conclusions. The evaluations of all the militants were very positive.

The importance of having a generation of older and more experienced militants in the organisation, who were (and are) essential so that the militant knowledge of previous generations would not be lost and for the training and mentoring of the new generation, was evidenced. The Congress paid homage to the "old guard", and also welcomed the "new guard", as it has helped to put into practice that which their elders have always advocated. The militants of the organisation who have been in the struggle since the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s stressed the importance of this moment, which points to the continuity of a militancy that, for us, begins with Juan Perez Bouzas, passes through the entire history of the struggle of Ideal Peres, through the Círculo de Estudos Libertários (CEL), which later became the Círculo de Estudos Libertários Ideal Peres (CELIP) and, in 2003, constituted the FARJ. We believe ourselves to be putting into practice the aspirations of the various personalities of this history, to which we believe we are giving due continuity.

At this point the objective is to continue on the quest for the social vector of anarchism. To put anarchism in contact with social movements, seeking the creation of the popular organisation. We are trying to do this through our three fronts.

The urban social movements front (our old occupations front) has been conducting ongoing work with urban occupations in Rio de Janeiro since 2003, giving continuity to the experiences that we had with the homeless movement in the decade of 1990. This front also encompasses, at present, the reconstruction of the Unemployed Workers' Movement (Movimento de Trabalhadores Desempregados - MTD), which struggles for work all over the country, and has existed in Rio de Janeiro since 2001. The MTD is now recuperating its strength, regrouping and uniting people from poor communities for the struggle. Besides this, this front has relations with the Landless Workers' Movement (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra - MST), to which it offers political education courses in both Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. The front is also close to and conducts activities with other entities and social movements such as the Popular Assembly - RJ (Assembléia Popular - RJ) and the Internationalist Front of the Homeless (Frente Internacionalista dos Tem-Teto - FIST).

The community front is responsible for the management of the Social-Culture Centre of Rio de Janeiro (Centro Cultura Social do Rio de Janeiro - CCS-RJ), an open social space that we maintain in the north of the city and that hosts a number of community activities in waste recycling, tutoring and entrance exam courses for the poor community of Morro dos Macacos, theatre workshops, cultural events, celebrations and meetings of various kind. This front is also responsible for the management of the Fábio Luz Social Library (Biblioteca Social Fábio Luz - BSFL), which

has existed since 2001 and around which runs the Marques da Costa Centre for Research (Núcleo de Pesquisa Marques da Costa - NPMC) which, founded in 2004, aims to produce theory for the organisation, in addition to researching the history of anarchism in Rio de Janeiro. Besides this, the community front administers CELIP, the FARJ's public space that aims to hold lectures and debates in order to draw in those newly interested in anarchism.

The agro-ecological front, called Anarchism and Nature, operates in rural social movements and groupings that work with agriculture and social ecology. It has contacts and works with the MST, La Via Campesina and spaces like the Floreal Cooperative and the Germinal Centre for Food and Health (Núcleo de Alimentação e Saúde Germinal). It conducts educational workshops in occupations, at schools and in poor communities. All this with the aim of recovering agriculture, agro-ecology, social ecology, eco-literacy and the solidarity economy. It seeks to involve workers, social movements activists and students in its activities.

To meet an important demand we headed a "transversal" project in which all fronts were inserted, called the Popular University (UP-RJ). This proposal was deployed, in fact, in an anti-capitalist popular education initiative focused on the transformation of society and having, as a tactic, political education within social movements. Other "transversal" works have also been realised with the edition of the journal Libera; the magazine Protesta! (together with the comrades from the anarchist collective Terra Livre in Sao Paulo); and books like O Anarquismo Social by Frank Mintz, O Anarquismo Hoje da União Regional Rhone-Alpes e Ricardo Flores Magón by Diego Abad de Santillán. Finally, there is the internal work of political education, relations, resource management, among others.

There is work being done, and much work to do. And really, as Malatesta once said, the task is great. Knowing that there is much to be done and knowing the greatness of our project of social transformation, far from discouraging us, has been a growing fuel that motivates us and leads us, day after day, to this so urgent task.

We hope that this brief theoretical contribution can assist in the building of a militant anarchism in various locations.

For social anarchism!
For the recovery of the social vector of anarchism!
Social revolution and libertarian socialism!

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Social Anarchism and Organisation
2008

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English translation of Anarquismo Social e Organização, by the Anarchist Federation of Rio de Janeiro (Federação Anarquista do Rio de Janeiro – FARJ), Brazil, approved at the 1st FARJ Congress, held on 30th and 31st of August 2008. Jonathan Payn (trans.)

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